



THE

ADVENTURES OF MR. LEDGER

AND

HIS FRIEND JACK JOHNSON.

BY ALBERT SMITH, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE WASSAIL ROWLS," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

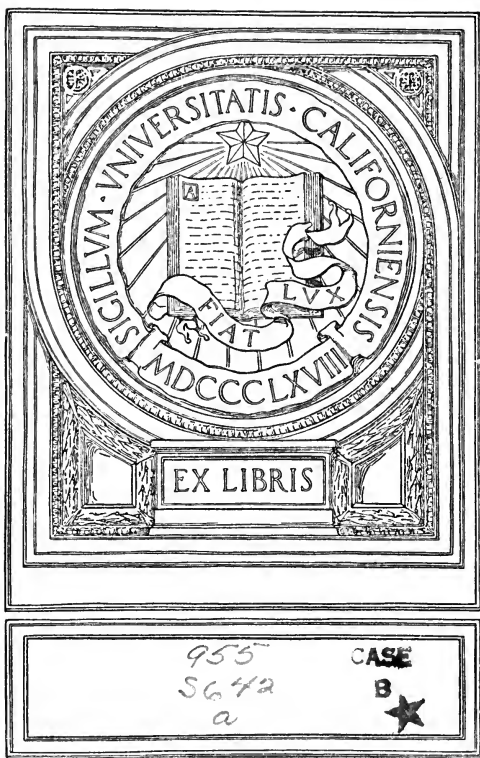
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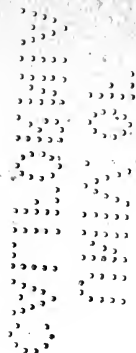
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# CONTENTS

OF

## THE THIRD VOLUME.

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### CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
What befel Mr. Ledbury and Jack upon Ascot Race- Course . . . . .	1

### CHAPTER II.

Mr. Ledbury ventures once more to the Opera for Signor Pizzicato's Concert . . . . .	20
---	----

### CHAPTER III.

The Break-up of Mr. Rawkins's Medical Establishment .	29
---	----

### CHAPTER IV.

The Unexpected Journey.—Ostend and Brussels .	41
---	----

### CHAPTER V.

The Tourists pursue their Journey along the Rhine .	59
---	----

### CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Ledbury's Inspiration, and Jack Johnson's version of the Legend of Drachenfels . . . . .	73
---	----

### CHAPTER VII.

The gallant manner in which Mr. Ledbury attacked the Fortress of Ehrenbreitstein . . . . .	82
---	----

### CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. De Robinson Junior has an interview with Mr. Prodgers . . . . .	97
--	----

### CHAPTER IX.

The Caravan of Wonders sets out for Clumpley .	111
--	-----

CHAPTER X.		PAGE
The Result of Mr. Prodgers's Itinerant Speculation		119
CHAPTER XI.		
Mrs. De Robinson's Fête Champêtre . . .		130
CHAPTER XII.		
Ledbury and Jack continue their Journey up the Rhine.		
—The Legend of Lurley . . . . .		143
CHAPTER XIII.		
Zurich.—The Night on the Rigi.—The Mistake . . .		160
CHAPTER XIV.		
The Pass of St. Gothard.—Ledbury and Jack arrive at Milan . . . . .		177
CHAPTER XV.		
Mr. Prodgers seeks to establish himself . . . . .		194
CHAPTER XVI.		
Good fortune comes to Jack.—A dangerous dilemma at Milan . . . . .		211
CHAPTER XVII.		
The Flight over the Simplon . . . . .		221
CHAPTER XVIII.		
A Fête at Paris.—Mr. Ledbury's Last Appearance in Public . . . . .		236
CHAPTER XIX.		
The Death of Edward Morris . . . . .		252
CHAPTER XX.		
Mr. Ledbury and Jack Johnson once more return home . . .		263
CHAPTER XXI.		
In which the wishes of most Parties are accomplished . . .		274
CHAPTER XXII.		
The last Indiscretion of Jack Johnson . . . . .		283
CHAPTER XXIII.		
Which winds up everybody's affairs . . . . .		291



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CHAPTER I.

WHAT BEFEL MR. LEDBURY AND JACK UPON ASCOT RACE-COURSE.

THE names of Henry the Fifth and Wellington are not, respectively, more intimately connected with the fields of Agincourt and Waterloo, than are those of certain provincial typographers with the various heaths, downs, hursts, or meads, upon which the races are held. It would not appear like Epsom unless the name of Dorling rang in our ears the whole way thither: it is absolutely necessary to the true enjoyment of Ascot and Egham that we should be continually reminded there are such enlightened printers as Oxley and Wetton still in existence; and if any vendor of cards at Hampton dared to insinuate

that others than Lindsey had furnished the lists of the horses, we should counsel his instant annihilation on the spot. There were plenty of these retail pasteboard merchants already on the road: and one of them—a gentleman without shoes, who had adorned his head with a red cotton handkerchief tied tightly over it, now thrust a card, that was wedged into a split stick, right into Mr. Ledbury's face, exclaiming,

“Oxley's c'rect list, my noble sportsman!”

“I am not deceived, then,” thought Titus; “he takes me not only for a sportsman, but a noble one.”

Whereupon Mr. Ledbury assumed a knowing air, and invested sixpence in the purchase of a card, from which he commenced studying the latest state of the odds with singular attention.

“Halloo! let me see the list,” cried Mr. Prodgers, who, to the great horror of Titus, was stamping up the hill in his shirt-sleeves, with his coat hung upon a stick over his shoulder. “Why, this is one of yesterday's!”

“Bless me!” said Mr. Ledbury; “impossible!”

“But very true,” returned Prodgers. “Look here—Wednesday: to-day is Thursday, you know.”

“The man must have made a mistake,” said Titus, turning round to upbraid him.

But the vendor was already at the bottom of the hill, attacking a four-in-hand.

“Never mind, Leddy,” exclaimed Johnson, coming up to their side; “the colours of the riders will be just the same to-day as they were yesterday, and you can fancy the horses are the same too. It will do quite as well.”

Perhaps Mr. Ledbury, as a noble sportsman, did not exactly see this; for the transaction had somewhat wounded his dignity. However, when the van stopped at the top of the hill, and they resumed their places, all his good-humour returned with his Derby Zephyr, which he once more put on to keep off the dust; and, knowing that the aristocracy were not in the habit of going to races in long vans, he did not care to be taken for one of them any longer, but became as hilarious and benevolent as heretofore.

The throng of pedestrians and vehicles increased, and at the Wheatsheaf at Virginia Water there was a perfect mob of carriages, many of whose intended occupiers were at breakfast in the best parlour, with such intensive appetites, that they took no notice of the courteous salute with which Mr. Prodgers greeted them upon the horn as they passed. So he turned his abilities from the instrumental to the vocal line, and, re-producing his song-book, volunteered an entertainment, which he called “Half an hour in

the middle of the day with Fairburn," and which, with *encores*, choruses, and incidental interruptions, lasted until they had passed the turnpike at Blacknest,—a pretty village, embosomed in trees, at the foot of one of the forest-hills,—and arrived at Sunninghill Wells: this establishment bearing witness to a singular geological phenomenon, equally curious with land-slips and the progression of glaciers. For there is an ancient board affixed to the premises, stating that they are "one quarter of a mile from the course:" which those skilled in distances affirm goes to prove that some internal convulsion of nature has either moved the course, grand-stand, posts and all, a great deal farther off than it used to be; or that Sunninghill Wells have altered their position, by a gradual, yet imperceptible, shifting of the earth, which may, in all probability, finally leave them at Bagshot. We furnish the hint for the benefit of any gentleman anxious to read some exciting paper to the Geological Society, since we believe that learned body have not yet turned their attention to it.

"Here you are, sir," bawled a man, who rushed from an ambush at the side of the road, and clung to the head-bits of the horses drawing the van, in a most violent paroxysm of desperate agony. "Look there—the 'Great St. Leger Stables!' I know'd you'd go along of me."

Mr. Ledbury's first idea had impinged upon brigands; but he now perceived that the man was a horse-keeper, as he looked at the "Great St. Leger Stables," which were simply constructed of turf and clothes-props, and roofed with heath and hurdles.

"Now, you'll just leave them horses alone," cried the driver, as he witnessed the attack, holding up his whip in an attitude of infliction.

"Don't you hear him say you're to leave 'em alone?" cried another touter, in a white linen surcoat, pulling the heads of the animals in a contrary direction, with equal energy. "This is the way, noble captains," he continued. "No mouldy oats here—all the reg'lar cocktail corn, and no mistake!"

"Who bought the burnt hay at Oaking?" ejaculated a third stable-man, separating the other two by dint of great exertion, and getting right in front of the pole. And by this time every available strap and buckle of the harness had been seized by the touters, at which they tugged and pulled with such unflinching vigour, that the horses became quite secondary affairs in the progression of the van.

"Now we've got our own corn, and ain't going to put up nowhere,—leastways, not with any of you," said the driver.

Whether this intimation alone would have been sufficient to get rid of the stable-keepers is

a matter of doubt, had not a private coach come up, and drawn them all away in an instant, except one more frantic than the rest, who remained until he was whipped away, expressing his opinion that the van and its occupants was only a cockney hutch of tailors, he know'd from the beginning.

This preliminary danger being passed, after much jostling and entanglement, coupled with the playful vagaries of jibbing-horses, who impaled the back-pannels of their carriages upon the poles of those behind, for which those behind were directly abused in the most unmeasured terms,—after a great deal of whipping, and lashing, and swearing, and running up banks on one side, and sinking deep into ruts of sand upon the other, the van arrived at a comparatively clear spot beyond the Swinley corner, at the end of the course. Here they determined to stop, in preference to being in the tenth rank a quarter of a mile below the distance-post, which was the only place that there now appeared a chance of getting to. Upon coming to this decision, the horses were taken out, and fastened to the side of the vehicle, whilst the party slightly refreshed themselves from the hampers, which being, in common with other race-course hampers, always too tall for the seats they are meant to go under, were soon opened and investigated.

This proceeding over, Johnson, who was all impatience to look after the Wilmers, proposed that

they should go upon the course, adding, it was not necessary that they should be tied to one another, so long as they found their way back to the van after the last race. And having been stopped by two highwaymen armed with clothes-brushes, who angrily insisted upon removing every atom of dust from their hats and coats, they were at last permitted to go whichever way they chose,—Ledbury and his friend selecting the first opportunity to slip quietly away from the others, who, under the guidance of Mr. Prodggers, plunged into the regions of the dancing-tents and gambling-booths outside the ropes.

“There they are!” suddenly ejaculated Mr. Ledbury, who had been investigating the rows of carriages with great care as they passed down the course. “There’s Fanny Wilmer’s bonnet, and I can see Miss Seymour and Em! Hurrah, Jack! come along.”

But Johnson needed no persuasion; and, after a delay of two seconds, consequent upon his anxiety in trying to get over the ropes, whilst Titus crept under them, and then each of them courteously changing their method at the same instant to accommodate the other, and producing the same confusion, they cleared the intervening promenade, and were close to the Wilmers’ carriage.

They were all there—old Mr. Wilmer upon the box, with Miss Seymour, and Mr. John

Wilmer standing upon the wheel at her side, and talking to her a great deal more than Mr. Ledbury saw the necessity for. Mrs. Wilmer, too, and her daughter were conversing with some friends who had just come up ; and opposite to them was Emma Ledbury, — the *belle* of the party, after all, — looking as pretty and animated as ever, and little thinking who was so near her, or she would not have coloured so deeply and so suddenly when she found out. But when Johnson, having been hurriedly introduced to the rest of the party, turned towards Emma, and their trembling hands met, although, to casual observers, it was only a common greeting of acquaintanceship, yet there was a magnetic sympathy in that quivering pressure, which silently conveyed to each of them, far better than words could have done, and as plainly as their fingers could express ideas, that although it was some time since they had met, yet their sentiments were still the same towards each other, — that they would continue to be so, — and that there were no other hands in the world whose touch could give such thrilling happiness. Johnson had never told Emma in plain literal words that he loved her, nor had she, in return, given him to understand, *vivâ voce*, that his addresses were acceptable ; but they both knew these things very well. It is not the deaf and dumb people alone who can talk with their fingers.



One of those popular delusions, supposed to be a trial of natural speed between different horses, termed a race, now took place; and when this was over, and the ladies had been assisted down from the carriage-seats, upon which they had stood during the struggle, Mr. Wilmer proposed a walk upon the course. Johnson directly offered his arm to Emma Ledbury, and Mr. John Wilmer, who did not see any great excitement in playing cavalier to his sister, took Miss Seymour under his care; so that Mr. Ledbury was obliged to accompany Fanny Wilmer, who was a very nice girl in her way, but not the one Titus wished to walk with. Mrs. Wilmer also followed with a friend, and the old gentleman was left with a bottle of sherry to take care of the carriage, and telegraph to any acquaintances he saw upon the course how happy he should be to have a glass of wine with them,—which signal he expressed by holding up the bottle, and winking his eye.

After a little pretty confusion in crossing the ropes, the whole party got upon the course, which was now covered with company, mountebanks, thimble-rigs, and Punch's shows. The immortal Jerry was there in an old Windsor uniform and cocked hat, regretting he could not dine with various individuals, on account of a prior engagement at the Castle; and also, the man in the red coat, with his travelling doll, and mysterious pack of cards. The infant Garrick, too, had

come out in great force, accompanied by his tutor, who carried the crown, tunic, and sword, necessary for his change from Hamlet to Richard the Third. But the humours of the race-course have been described so often, and so well, that the subject is now as devoid of freshness as Ascot Heath itself after a month of hot dry weather.

There were so many people, that it was no wonder Johnson and Emma soon lost sight of their party; for they were both deeply engaged in a very interesting conversation, which lasted so long, that they had wandered a considerable distance from the carriage down the course. And, although bells had rung at different intervals, and horses had pranced about the course, and people had run half across, and been put back again by policemen, they still kept walking on, until an outrider somewhat startled them by riding up, and begging they would go outside the ropes, as another race was about to commence. Whereupon, as they were at least a quarter of a mile from their friend's situation, they hastened to get what places they could, merely until the race was over, when they could rejoin the Wilmers.

"Let the poor gipsy-woman tell your fortune, my pretty gentleman," said a handsome dark-eyed girl, who approached them.

"It is not worth knowing," said Jack, in a half-melancholy tone. "I am afraid it is settled."

"Let me cross the pretty lady's hand with a piece of silver," continued the gitana, glancing at his fair companion.

"I have no change, my good woman," said Emma.

"Perhaps the gentleman can find a small sixpence," resumed the gipsy; "and perhaps some day you will keep his money for him, my pretty lady."

"There—go along!" said Johnson, smiling as he gave the woman the sixpence, and pressing Emma's arm somewhat closely within his own.

"You are born to great fortune, my pretty lady," observed the gipsy, "and one that loves you is not far off, who is to share it with you. He has told you so a great many times to-day, and you were very happy to hear it. Is it not true what the poor gipsy-woman tells you, sweet gentleman?"

"Do you think it is true?" said Johnson, in a low voice to Emma, as the woman, seeing she was close to a carriage full of ladies, hurried off to arrive before another prophetess, who was approaching.

But Emma returned no answer; her parasol had never before been so very difficult to open as it was just at that instant.

"Do say if it is true," continued Johnson in the same tone; "and then I will tell you some-

thing in return, Emma—I may call you Emma, may I not?”

“I cannot help what you choose to call me,” replied the pretty girl, in a tremor of mingled agitation and happiness. “What were you going to tell me?”

“That I love you dearly; that all I have gone through lately has been for your sake alone; and that I have been conceited enough to think you also felt some little interest in my welfare. Was I right in so doing?”

Poor Emma! she ought not to have been astonished at hearing what she knew so very well before, and yet her surprise prevented her from returning any answer. But she looked round towards Johnson, leaving the refractory parasol entirely to fate, and then he saw that her eyes were glistening with tears.

“Do not be angry with me, Emma, for saying what I have done,” continued Jack, gaining fresh confidence with every word, now that the rubicon was passed. “I know I ought not to have mentioned this subject: perhaps more especially at the present time, when my prospects appear more uncertain than ever. But that was the reason which partly drove me to speak. You are not displeased with me? May I hope that you will not altogether look upon me as a mere friend?”

Still Emma made no reply; but as Johnson took her hand in his own, the slightest pressure

in the world assured him that his suit was not discarded ; and that his future attempts at establishing himself might be undertaken with greater confidence than ever. The races, the mob of pedestrians by whom they were surrounded, their own friends, were all entirely forgotten for some minutes, for their hearts were too full to think of anything else but themselves ; and Jack felt that he would not have exchanged places or possessions with the most envied amongst all the high and wealthy company upon the course that day. Nor was it until Emma gently suggested that their absence might appear strange to the Wilmers, that he was recalled from his day-dream to the circumstance of the race being finished, and the company once more assembling on the course.

They had to encounter a little of the usual bantering from their friends when they got back to the carriage ; and when Emma was once more restored to her party, Jack took a temporary leave of them, and withdrew ; as much for the purpose of strolling along the course by himself, and collecting his ideas, which for the last twenty minutes had been perfectly bewildered, as to avoid the appearance of paying too much attention to Emma before the Wilmers, who were in charming ignorance of the real circumstances of the case. And feeling happier than he had done for many months, he

threaded his way amongst the throng of promenaders towards the upper end of the course, entirely lost in a very intricate labyrinth of pleasant reflections, until a well-known voice called him by his name, and caused him to look towards the point from which it proceeded.

Upon the box-seat of an elegant britska, which was drawn up to the ropes in one of the best situations on the course, was Mr. Ledbury, in a state of extreme hilarity, holding a tinfoil-capped bottle in one hand, and a tall pink glass in the other, from which he was continually taking wine with nobody, and apparently being on terms of the most convivial familiarity with a very stout man, in mustachios, at his side ; whom he occasionally punched in the ribs with the neck of the bottle, or winked at him as he drank his champagne. Two handsome young women, elegantly dressed, were in the carriage, which was surrounded by more stylish-looking men ; and upon the opposite seat was spread such a display of lobsters, fowls, raised pies, and tall bottles, that people stopped to gaze at the collation, and partake of it in imagination, in company with the throng of beggars, conjurors, fortune-tellers, and pilferers, by which the party was surrounded.

“Halloo, Jack !” cried Titus, as his friend approached ; “here we are again ! How d’ye do ? Here’s a lark ! Have some champagne

—no gooseberry—I'm all right!—ha! ha! ha! jolly!”

Before Jack accepted the proffered libation, he glanced towards the ladies, as in politeness bound, and in hopes that some one would favour him with an introduction. But this was apparently not needed, for the one nearest to him, as she looked round, cried out in accents of agreeable surprise,

“ Mon Dieu ! mon ami—c'est toi ! c'est toi ! que je suis contente de te voir encore ! ”

“ Aimée ! ” exclaimed Johnson, in return, as he recognised his old flame of the Rue St. Jacques. And, before he had recovered from his surprise, the lady leant over the side of the carriage, and drawing Jack towards her, kissed him on both cheeks, *en plain jour*, to the great horror of two old dowagers in an adjoining chariot, who thought they had got near a very odd lot, and the immense gratification of Mr. Ledbury, who directly drank both their healths in a fresh glass of champagne.

“ Jack ! ” cried Titus, as soon as he recovered his breath, “ let me introduce you to Signor Pizzicato—Mr. Johnson—Jack Johnson, you know ; you have heard me talk of him.”

“ How are you do, Monsieur Shonson ? ” said the good-tempered signor.

Jack acknowledged the courtesy, and was then presented to the other lady, Mademoiselle Pauline

Rosière, also of her Majesty's theatre, and one or two other Italians, as well as the Honourable Floss Pageant, and his faithful follower, the Baron Devoidoff Wits, a distinguished foreigner. These two last appeared to be in reality the owners of the carriage, and heads of the party, although nobody seemed to pay them much attention. But the great aim of Pageant's life was, to be considered a "fast man." And, as he thought, the fact of his having brought the present party down to Ascot, as well as having entered a horse for the cup, went a great way towards establishing his claim to that title, he did not care to look any further. Possibly he would not have seen anything if he had, for, in spite of the dictionary of synonyms, there is a great deal of difference between being "fast" and "quick." The attributes usually exist in an inverse ratio.

Mr. Pageant and his *umbra* now went off to see their horse saddled, leaving the rest of the party to themselves, when Aimée began to laugh, and show her teeth, and talk so fast, that there was not much occasion for the others to exert themselves in keeping up the conversation. And perhaps Jack did not feel any great inclination to do so; indeed, his old friend remarked that he had become "*triste comme un vrai Anglais*." In Aimée, however, there was not much difference. Her features were somewhat more delicate, and her cheeks had lost the freshness that eight



or ten months back characterised the rosy *grisette*, but she had gained much in manner and *tournure*. It appeared that she had re-entered the Académie shortly after Jack and Ledbury left Paris—the ballet being the *El Dorado* of her class; and had made such rapid progress therein that she was pronounced sufficiently effective to undergo the ordeal of our own opera audience.

“And, how came you to leave the Wilmers, Titus?” asked Jack, as soon as he found an opportunity of speaking.

“Better fun here, Jack,” said Mr. Ledbury, adding moreover, that he was as right as the sum of ninepence is occasionally supposed to be under undefined circumstances. “What amusement was it for me, hopping about after John Wilmer and Miss Seymour? I thought she was going to walk with me. Never mind—have some wine—hurrah!”

“I think you are getting on, Titus,” observed Jack, smiling at his friend’s hilarity.

“This is life, Jack,” replied Mr. Ledbury. “the life that I was born to lead—isn’t it, Aimée?”

“Je m’appelle Mademoiselle l’Etoile,” returned the *danseuse*, with a smile, and an expression of mock gravity.

“Three cheers for Mademoiselle l’Etoile,” continued Mr. Ledbury. “I shall call you Aimée—eh?—you recollect,

‘ Messieurs les étudiants,  
Montez à la chaumière.’ ”

“ Oh ! hé ! hé !—oh ! hé ! hé !—hi donc !  
pas si fort ! point du télégraph ! ”

And, in extreme excitement, Mr. Ledbury stood upon the box of the carriage, and indulged in various anti-garde-municipale dances, whilst Signor Pizzicato emptied a fresh bottle of champagne into a tankard, and handed it to Johnson, and the others of the party.

“ I shan’t go home with the ‘ Tourniquets,’ ” said Mr. Ledbury ;—“ a van is low, and home is slow. I wish Miss Seymour could see me here.”

Had Mr. Ledbury’s *chapeau Français* been the cap of Fortunatus, his desire could not have been more speedily gratified ; for at this instant all the Wilmer detachment had sauntered once more along the course, and now stood at the ropes, attracted by the noise of the party.

“ Halloo ! ” cried Titus, stopping short in his exertions as he recognised them, “ here you all are, then—come along ! ”

“ Hush, Ledbury ! for goodness’ sake, what are you about ? ” said Jack, earnestly. “ I will go to them.”

And, crimson with confusion, Jack hurried away from the carriage, to make what excuses he best might to Emma Ledbury for being with such an apparently uproarious company. For special

reasons, he did not leave her side again until the conclusion of the day's sport, when he returned to the van, and gradually contrived to get the rest of his companions together. All of them were in amazingly good spirits; and, as Johnson was not behind hand in hilarity, the journey home was perhaps the most amusing part of the excursion; the fun being fast and furious until they were once more put down in Grafton Street, in a state of wonderful preservation, considering all things, at half an hour before midnight.

## CHAPTER II.

MR. LEDBURY VENTURES ONCE MORE TO THE OPERA FOR  
SIGNOR PIZZICATO'S CONCERT.

TITUS returned to town with his distinguished friends, as he had expressed his intention of doing. The Honourable Floss and the Baron proceeded to Windsor at the end of the race, so that the inmates of the carriage were comparatively one party ; and very merry indeed they were, especially after they had stopped to take tea at the " Wheatsheaf," and seen the pile of dry rocks humorously called "the cascade," at Virginia Water. And when they parted, upon arriving in London, which they did with many interchanges of civilities and courteous speeches, Signor Pizzicato hoped Mr. Ledbury would come to his concert the next morning, for which purpose he would leave his name at the stage-door of the Opera. Titus winced a little at the recollection of his late disasters at the same place ; but as he discovered that nobody seemed to know much about them, from the conversation of the Signor, he determined to go.

Accordingly, the next day, one hour after noon, Mr. Ledbury presented himself at the door of Her Majesty's Theatre, having paid, as usual, great attention to his toilet, and looking very blithe and sprightly; albeit the champagne of the previous day had induced the consumption of two separate bottles of soda-water that very morning. He was slightly nervous as he walked up to the person who was keeping the desk in the hall, and inquired if his name had been left; nor was his trepidation diminished as he regarded the blunderbusses over the chimney-piece, which he imagined must be kept in readiness for the purpose of shooting all persons trespassing behind the scenes who had no business there,—the spring-guns, as it were, of the Opera preserves, the man-traps being principally found amongst the ballet.

Signor Pizzicato had not forgotten his invitation, and Titus passed on until, after various mistakes, he once more found himself on the stage. And very curious did the house look in the morning. The whole front of the audience part of the theatre was entirely covered in with canvass, which diminished its size to a singular degree; whilst the daylight fell with dreary coldness through the windows above the flies and over the gallery. Men were rolling down heavy drop-scenes from the top, the *coulisses* not being able to afford accommodation to flats in more senses

than one ; women were at work upon clouds and fountains, that were placed about the stage ; carpenters were sawing out the borders of some cut forest or statue ; and in the midst of it all, one of the ruling powers of the ballet, with a violin in his hand, was giving a lesson to a Terpsichorean divinity in very short petticoats, and a morning promenade-cape over her shoulders, who looked something like one of the antithetical combinations produced by those dissected cards, whereby all sorts of heads and bodies can be made to fit together.

Wending his way amidst a labyrinth of side-scenes on the opposite prompt-side of the house, Mr. Ledbury followed a large fiddle, which he presumed was going to the scene of harmony, and at length got safely to the apartment behind the orchestra in the opera concert-room. The *camera*, (we will call it by an Italian name,) which, from its one window at the end, may almost be termed *obscura* as well, appropriated as the green-room to the singers, is an apartment in which plain utility has certainly been considered more than ornament. The walls are adorned with slight extempore cartoons by occasional idlers ; the furniture consists of four chairs and some side-scenes, put there to be out of the way ; and a general air of simplicity reigns throughout, consistent with all really great enterprises.

But there was a goodly company collected in

this unambitious room. First of all was Signor Pizzicato himself, with a programme in his hand, looking very hot, and arranging the order of the *morceaux*. Then there was the amiable Benedict, with a smile and good-tempered word for everybody; and near him the industrious Salabert, who, in point of long service and undying utility, may be termed the Widdecomb of the opera, talking to Giovanni Walker, the "librarian in attendance." And the mighty Lablache was making the room shake again with a few random Cs and Ds, such as Jupiter's thunder would produce under the management of Apollo, now and then stopping to address some lively *badinage* to Grisi or Persiani, whom Titus hardly recognised in their unassuming morning dresses. At the end of the room was seated the pretty Moltini, with our own pale beauty, Albertazzi; and nearer the door our talented countrywoman, Mrs. Alfred Shaw, was conversing with her droll and original compatriot, John Parry, who, in spite of his "mamma" being so "very particular," appeared perfectly happy and contented. Besides all these, Fornasari, Mario, and a host of other stars, were standing about the room, not as Elvinos, Arturos, and the like, but in common everyday frock-coats and trowsers, quite pleasant and affable, and very like ordinary gentlemen. And the distinguished foreigner who had played the sky-rocket rondo upon the piano at Mrs. De

Robinson's was also there, with his hair in want of the scissors more badly than ever, looking very volcanic, and evidently preparing for some extraordinary skirmish over the keys, in which contest he was to be joined by another foreign gentleman in the same line, who was to make his *début* that morning,—one of those countless professors of musical sleight-of-hand, who rise up during the season as thick as blackberries, and deserve almost as much credit for the long practice required to give them such rapid and certain execution, as the other clever individuals who toss up knives and rings at the races, or dance horn-pipes amongst eggs.

Mr. Ledbury was greatly amused when he first entered the room, and put himself in several distinguished attitudes, that he might appear perfectly unembarrassed, and quite accustomed to excellent society. But, after a time, not perfectly understanding the Babel of languages which sounded on every side, he thought he should like to hear a little of what was going on in front, and therefore applied to Signor Pizzicato to put him in the right way of so doing. That good-tempered gentleman immediately introduced Titus to the entrance of a long dark passage, at the end of which, and close to the door leading on to the orchestra, there was a nook, in which, if he stood, he could command a view of both the audience and the singers. And very pretty in-



deed did the room appear from this position ; for, being a morning-concert, the bonnets of the ladies, of every shade and tint, gave it the appearance of an elegant *parterre*, as Titus looked down upon them ; and almost compensated for the want of excitement and enthusiasm which candle-light and after-dinner gave rise to at evening performances. For the audience at a *matinée* is generally cold and severe, approaching nearer in its character to that of the Ancient Concerts ; at which meetings, should a change of fashion ever induce a falling-off of company, we recommend the directors to contract immediately with Madame Tussaud for a fresh set in wax-work, who might be made, by the simplest mechanism, to turn over the leaves of their programmes all at once ; and who would have the advantage of possessing great powers of endurance, as well as inspiring the singers quite as much by their solemn attention as the present supporters of those musical exhumations.

Several songs, duets, and instrumental solos took place, to the great gratification of Mr. Ledbury ; and then the period arrived for the piano-skirmish between the two foreign gentlemen, which was to be the *cheval de bataille* of the morning. To accomplish this performance, it was necessary that another piano should be carried into the orchestra, and Titus therefore left his nook in the passage, to make room for some

of the music-stands to be brought out, before the new grand instrument was placed there. But, as the duet appeared to excite much curiosity, and several were waiting round the door to follow the musician to the platform, Mr. Ledbury thought he would slip in to his station before the piano, instead of going after it. He therefore walked along the passage before the men who were carrying the body of the instrument, like a chief undertaker, chuckling at his sly tact; until, upon arriving at the niche in the wall, he found, to his great discomfiture, that it was entirely filled up with stools and music stands. To go back was impossible, for the passage was entirely filled up, and he had no alternative but to be driven onwards to the orchestra, upon the platform of which he was now forcibly impelled, by the decree of those malicious fates, who appeared to have decided that Mr. Ledbury's appearance at the opera, under any circumstances, should always be attended by a corresponding appearance, against his will, in public.

A burst of applause greeted him as he advanced, the greater part of the audience taking him for the foreign musical gentleman—which idea his spectacles, and turned-up wristbands, somewhat justified; nor did this cease until the real *artiste* advanced, and drawing Mr. Ledbury from his place somewhat unceremoniously, made a grand bow, whilst Titus retired to the back in

great confusion, where he was compelled to wait throughout the performance, as the door was quite blocked up; but, as soon as it had come to an end, which at one time appeared very doubtful, he hurried back to the waiting-room, making an inward vow, without mental reservation of any kind, never to set foot within the opera again: and he kept it.

On his return, Signor Pizzicato began to banter him upon his successful *début*, which, whilst it convinced Titus that his previous adventure was not known, made him somewhat uneasy, especially when the others joined in the laugh. He therefore went back to the stage of the theatre, where the rehearsal of a ballet was still going on; and was not long in discovering Aimée amongst the *coryphées*. Some of the company, who had orchestra-seats, overcome by the heat of the room, were leaving the concert at this moment, and, attracted by the novel sight, loitered a few minutes at the wings, to watch the dancers. Aimée, who had just finished a *pas*, soon perceived Titus at the side scene, and, bounding towards him, to inquire how he was after the hilarity of yesterday, greeted him with her usual salute—a French one, be it understood, upon both cheeks, and in all propriety.

And when Titus, overcome with ecstasy at being thus distinguished, turned round to see who were the witnesses of this gratifying occur-

rence, his eyes encountered those of Mrs., Miss, and Mr. Horatio Grimley, who were now quitting the concert-room, on their way back to Islington, to take a tea *à la fourchette aux crevettes*, with Mrs. Hoddle, lately returned from the country, and, of course, tell her all they had seen; in which, we may safely anticipate, was included the sad career which young Ledbury was heedlessly following, and the disreputable connexions he had formed, in all probability through his acquaintance with that Mr. Johnson.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE BREAK-UP OF MR. RAWKINS'S MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT.

FROM the very day of the Dispensary election, the results of the contest were made visible to public eyes in the abode of Mr. Koops. Within a fortnight the rails in front of the house were painted a most lively Islington green ; and a small conservatory was established on the sills of the parlour-window, comprising three geraniums, two verbenas, and a fine specimen of the plant that smells like cherry-pie, all of which had been received from a travelling floriculturist, in exchange for a by-gone coat of Mr. Koops's. A gay drugget, of the real theatrical third-act-of-a-comedy drawing-room pattern was also laid down in the parlour, to hide the carpet ; and the gentleman who had taken the first-floor unfurnished, was prevailed upon to hang up some muslin curtains, which certainly looked better from the street than the former ones of faded moreen, bound with black velvet, and always awakening associations connected with the outside of Richardson's show.

Bright rays were evidently breaking upon the

previous twilight of Mr. Koops's professional career. He had already been sent for to attend the servants of one of the Dispensary electors, who went away, and never paid, which was, however, of no great consequence, the introduction into the family being the chief point gained; and his ambitious dreams began to take so high a flight, that he anticipated some day even attending the Grimleys; to bring about which coveted event, he made Mrs. Koops call upon Mrs. Hoddle very frequently, and sing his praises in an indirect manner, well knowing that it would all go back to the Grimleys, according to custom.

But, like the little people in the Dutch weather-houses — those small meteorologists, whose race is so rapidly departing from the face of the earth, — the more the coming sunshine of prosperity brought Mr. Koops from his modest mansion, to bask in its beams, the more did Mr. Rawkins retire to the recesses of his establishment, and prepare for taking his final leave of the stage, upon which he had so long supported the character of a medical man, although that character had ungratefully refused to support him in return. Johnson and Prodgers were still with him; but, as there was nothing to do, their services might easily have been dispensed with. Mr. Rawkins divided his time between walking in many great coats, up high hills, upon sultry days, in company with Mr. Dags, the trainer; shutting

himself up upon some mysterious transaction, on the second floor; paying undivided attention to the landlady at the corner; or studying new ancient statues in the back-parlour of his house. As for Bob, who was still retained, he mechanically took down the shutters, and put them up again, swept out the surgery, and dusted the shelves as formerly; but his labour was perfectly unnecessary, for nobody came, his master having already resigned his police and parish appointments. A bill upon the outside of the house also advised the passers-by that it was to let; and an advertisement occasionally inserted in "The Times," and on the cover of "The Lancet," gave hints to the world in general of a snug practice to be disposed of in a populous neighbourhood, with a retail attached, capable of great improvement. And so things ran to disorder. The flies wandered at their will over the blue and white packets of soda-powders, like alien guests in the deserted halls of former greatness; the ready-made pitch-plasters curled up with the sun, until they assumed the shape of wafer-cakes; the leeches gradually drooped and died in their crockery sarcophagus; and Mr. Prodgers, removing the brass tube of the gas-light, fitted on to it the ivory end of a stethoscope, and turned it into a "puff-and-dart," to whose missiles the plaster-of-paris horse from the centre pane of the window, ultimately fell a martyr. The only things in the house which

remained as usual were the pigeons, rabbits, and guinea-pigs ; and they fluttered, scratched, and fed just the same as ever, awaiting the time when Hoppy should agree with Mr. Rawkins for the transfer of a part of them to his zoological bazaar at Cow Cross.

“ What do you mean to do now, Jack ? ” inquired Mr. Prodgers of Johnson, as they sat upon the housetop one fine afternoon, towards the close of Mr. Rawkins’s medical career.

“ Heaven only knows ; I should be very glad to tell you,” was the reply. “ Every plan I had formed is entirely knocked on the head ; and at a time, too, when I most wanted to see my way a little clearly. I wish I was in your place. There appears to be a fate against my ever getting on in life, with every exertion that I can make in the attempt.”

“ I wonder you don’t look out for some girl with lots of tin,” observed Mr. Prodgers, in his innocence of Johnson’s attachment to Emma Ledbury. “ You’re such a jolly fellow, you know, you ought to find heaps of money.”

“ Look out for some girl with lots of tin ! ” Possibly Mr. Prodgers might have turned the advice in this phrase more elegantly, and adapted a more refined style of expression ; but the meaning would have remained the same. The counsel was, however, thrown away upon Johnson ; and would have been equally so had his



feelings towards Emma never risen above the natural flirtation of a young man of six-and-twenty with a pretty girl of eighteen. For he had noticed in society — whether from looking through the false medium of a distempered observation, or actually from some merciful dispensation of the Fates, we really cannot very well say, — that those young ladies whose appearance was the strangest, whose manners were the least pleasing, and whose *tournure* altogether partook of the old-fashioned and unromantic to a very great degree, were usually pointed out to him as excellent catches, and worth making up to ; whilst the pretty, interesting girls, who boasted of very few diamonds and rubies, beyond their own eyes and lips, were universally without a penny. But, perhaps, after all, this balance of attractions was very right and proper, although Jack was always certain to which class he should incline, did he ever feel a desire to commit what, at that time, he deemed the very great impropriety of matrimony.

“ I cannot make out what Rawkins is about,” continued Prodgers, as he did not receive any particular reply from Johnson to his last observations.

“ Writing away, as if for his life,” replied Jack : “ I cannot think myself what he is after ; he has been all the week in that back-room, as hard at work as a bank-clerk.”

And this was true. For several days past Mr. Rawkins had been indefatigably employed with his pen, in company with a very small man, who had a very large head, and wore spectacles, and a black gambroon surtout. The first impression of his assistants led to the belief that he was engaged in writing a "Complete Pigeon Fancier, and Rabbit-keepers' Manual;" but this idea was dispelled when, at the end of ten days, Mr. Rawkins brought down three enormous ledgers, and put them on the desk in the surgery, and disclosed their object to Johnson and Prodgers, of his own accord.

"These books," said Mr. Rawkins, "are not deceptions; they are merely the accounts of what my practice ought to have been. How do you think this page sounds?"

And, opening one of the tomes, labelled "DAY-BOOK," he commenced as follows:—

"*Die Martis*, May nine. — Mrs. Rosamond Pond, *Rep: Haust:* six, visit *nocte manequæ* (half-a-crown each); total, fourteen shillings.

"Sir Bagnigge Wells's butler, *Extractio Dentis*, two and six; paid at the time.

"Amwell Hill, Esq., *Pulv: Ipecac: Comp:* six. *Mist:* saline, six ounce: that makes six shillings.

"Mrs. Peerless Poole. Attending — one guinea: taken out in poultry, new laid eggs, and potatoes.

“Extra visit to Sir Hugh Myddleton’s head. *Hirudines*—is that spelt right, Mr. Prodgers? leeches, you know,—*hirudines*, eight: four shillings; and two and six—six and six.

“Total of day’s receipts—um!—two, thirteen, thirteen and six, and five is—ah!—altogether two pounds ten. That will do, I think, pretty well. Don’t you think so?”

“Very well, indeed, sir; what is it?” asked Jack, all in a breath.

“Why, you see,” said Mr. Rawkins, “my book-keeping has been very much neglected: but, as people taking a business like to know something about it, we have prepared these accounts very carefully and impartially, against any one should come. You know it is no deception, because I might have attended all these people, if I had chosen.”

And the advertisements, after several nibbles, at last got a bite; for, in a few mornings from this conversation a hack-cab drove up to the door, from which emerged a gentleman with a very hooky nose, having the air of a cockatoo in a suit of mourning, who, after a lively argument with the cabman, upon the subject of distance as compared to sixteen-pence, entered the surgery.

Mr. Rawkins chanced to be in the shop at the moment, and somewhat suspecting his mission, received him with great courtesy.

“Mr. Rawkins, I presume?” said the visitor.

The head of the establishment bowed in acquiescence.

"I believe you have a practice to dispose of. What may be the reason of your giving it up?"

"Principally ill health," returned Mr. Rawkins. The other looked at his muscular chest and florid face, and said nothing. "And a lucrative appointment to a county hospital," continued Mr. Rawkins. "I can assure you this is an eligible opportunity seldom to be met with. Look at these books, sir."

And giving the gentleman a chair, Mr. Rawkins placed the ledgers before him, upon the counter.

"And, for what consideration do you propose parting with the practice?" asked the visitor.

"Two years' purchase," replied Mr. Rawkins. "The annual receipts are five hundred pounds. I will sell it for a thousand, and give you a fortnight's introduction to the principal patients."

"That is a very short time, is it not?"

"Quite sufficient," replied Mr. Rawkins, "upon my honour." And his honour was not at all deteriorated by the affirmation.

"I can insure you the whole of my present patients. They would employ anybody upon my recommendation."

"What other outlay would there be?" asked the stranger.

"The stock and fixtures to be taken at a va-

uation. I have the finest rabbits in London, as well as pigeons. I suppose you have heard of my lops and pouters?"

But, singular to say, the visitor had not, nor did he appear to comprehend very well what connexion lops and pouters had with the normal pursuits of a general practitioner. However, he looked over the books, whilst Mr. Rawkins left the surgery for a few minutes, and going down into the kitchen, told Bob to creep up the area stairs, and come hurriedly into the shop from the street, stating that he—his master—was wanted at Lady Bunhill's immediately. This *ruse* Bob accomplished with much credit to himself; and the visitor, who gave his name as Mr. Pattle, late house-surgeon to the —— hospital, thinking Mr. Rawkins was hurried, took his leave, promising to consult with his solicitor, and let the other gentleman know his determination at the earliest opportunity.

In the mean time Johnson and Prodgers took their *départure*, — the latter gentleman to share the abode of a brother student, wherein he was accommodated every night with a sofa and two great-coats, for the remaining period of his pupilage; and Jack returned to his old lodgings, which he found just the same as when he quitted them, with the same fly-temples in the windows, the same dilapidated screens, and stone fruit upon the mantelpiece, and the identical rusty keys and

scrooping locks that he had left there. Yet he involuntarily hummed "As I view these scenes so charming" when he entered the old rooms, and surveyed the various humble attempts at second-floor ornamental furniture with intense satisfaction; albeit he had not made any great advances in furthering his prospects since he had last dwelt amongst them. But when Titus came to see him again in his ancient quarters, and they had a pipe together as formerly, with some of the celebrated "commingled," that was still to be obtained "round the corner," as well as talked over their intentions, and unburthened themselves of all their secrets to each other, Jack found, after all, there was nothing like being master of your own time, although he had not certainly much to complain of restraint during his abode with Mr. Rawkins.

A fortnight passed away, and one bright sunny afternoon the Grimleys were taking a walk in the pleasant locality that lies between Islington and Hornsey, when their attention was excited by the sudden appearance of a mob of people at the end of one of the roads, shouting, cheering, and evidently approaching them at a swift pace. Somewhat alarmed at the tumult, which reached them plainly even from a distance, they opened the gate of one of the fields, and took their position behind it until the crowd had passed, their first ideas of the assemblage being connected with





J Leech

Original in the possession of the artist



some great political riot. On came the mass, screaming, jostling, and running as if a regiment of cavalry was at their heels, and then, to their speechless astonishment, the Grimleys perceived Mr. Rawkins in the centre of the great body, and its accompanying cloud of dust, bounding like an antelope along the turnpike road, attired in a linen jacket and drawers, with a handkerchief tied round his head, and a short stick in his hand, with which he appeared to be propelling himself against the air. He shot past them like an arrow, and in another minute was concealed, together with his followers, by a turn in the road.

This was the last appearance of that remarkable gentleman in Islington or its vicinity. Like the Irish chieftain O'Donoghue, who one fine morning galloped across the lake of Killarney, and then faded from the view of the wondering beholders in the mists that enveloped him, he was never seen again. That he lost his match was subsequently known by popular report; that he parted with his practice for a tithe of what he asked for it, was promulgated by Mrs. Hoddle, who knew some friends of Mr. Pattle; and that his pigeons and rabbits found an ultimate home in Cow Cross, Hoppy was enabled to affirm. Within a few weeks the retail establishment at the corner also changed hands, and the landlady disappeared as well; but in what direction was

not ascertained until long afterwards. And then Mr. Ledbury was the medium of communicating the intelligence to the public: it will be given forth in due season, before we quite close this eventful history. Bob remained with Mr. Pattle, together with his old friend the leech; but when Mr. Pattle retired from practice, which he did in the course of a few months, from having nothing to do beside, the small assistant paid a short visit to his *Alma Mater*, the Union Workhouse, and finally found a permanent situation in the establishment of — somebody we could name, but it is not yet time.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE UNEXPECTED JOURNEY.—OSTEND AND BRUSSELS.

FOR some weeks after the events of the last chapter little occurred to diversify the ordinary routine of everyday life with any of the personages connected with our chronicles. Emma Ledbury still remained at Clumpley ; but she had communicated all her secrets to Fanny Wilmer, after the usual manner of young ladies when they first get engaged ; and now ventured to correspond with Johnson, who was never tired of receiving the delicate *billets*,—so small and fairy-like, that it was a wonder they were not lost amidst the million common-place despatches they travelled with,—but used to peruse and re-peruse them, long after he knew the contents by heart. Titus was tolerably employed in making himself generally useful to his father, or passing his evenings with Johnson ; and Jack himself still kept his head full of schemes for future advancement. Mrs. Ledbury, according to custom at this time of the year, began to throw out masked hints of the benefit her health would receive from a

visit to some sea-side watering-place, casting forth Herne Bay as a pilot-balloon, to see which way the wind blew, and when she had ascertained that the current was tolerably favourable, launching out to Brighton, (which would be so pleasant and convenient for Mr. Ledbury senior, in consequence of the railway,) and even aspiring to a voyage across the Channel, which might terminate at Boulogne or Havre. And the Grimleys, with the assistance of Mrs. Hoddle, employed themselves principally in canvassing the probable results of Mr. Titus Ledbury's ill-judged attachment to an opera-dancer,—they had always said no good would come from his Parisian trip with that Mr. Johnson,—and publicly thanking Providence that their Horace had no similar propensities or acquaintances. But they were just as overwhelming as ever, when they met the Ledburys, in their courtesies and inquiries after their “dear little Walter,” and the other branches of the family.

One evening old Mr. Ledbury returned from his house of business in the city in a state of great perplexity. A document, of large pecuniary importance, as connected with his mercantile transactions, required the attested signature of a former partner in his establishment,—a Mr. Howard, who had been for three or four years past residing at Milan, whilst he conducted some extensive manufacturing works between that

city and Verona, on the line of a contemplated railway to Venice. His embarrassment arose from the difficulty of finding any one whom he could entrust with this mission. His solicitor, it is true, offered to undertake it, but this plan was altogether too expensive ; and there was not one of his clerks who was at all acquainted with continental usages or methods of travelling. At last it struck him that he might make Titus serviceable in this respect, telling him at the same time, that he did not wish him to go alone,—for his good-natured simplicity was not unlikely to involve him in some calamity,—but that he would pay the expenses of any experienced person he chose to take with him, provided, of course, that they kept within the bounds of prudence. And, as may be imagined, Titus was not long in acquiescing in the suggestion, or making choice of a companion. The instant he became acquainted with his father's proposition he rushed off to Jack Johnson, who did not appear to throw any difficulties in the way ; but by the next morning had calculated the expense, laid out the time, and arranged the route that they should take, by which they might see most with very little extra delay. For Jack sat up nearly all night, and with an ancient map, and two or three old guide-books, dotted and pencilled off the whole journey against Titus called upon him. Old Mr. Ledbury him-

self made no objections. He had been pleased with Johnson's candour at their interview respecting his attentions to Emma, and knew that, with all his hilarity, he had no lack of honour or common sense.

"This is a happiness I never expected," said Jack, when Titus called the next day. "To think, after all, Leddy, that you and I should be going abroad again!"

"Capital," answered Ledbury; "and nothing to pay! I suppose we shall do it in style this time, Jack. Post-carriages, you know, and the best part of the steamers—not like shabbroons."

"You leave it all to me," replied Johnson, smiling. "Only recollect, in travelling, the more you pay, the less you always see, or enjoy yourselves. I've marked out such a trip!"

"Where are we going, then?"

"Oh! the Rhine, Switzerland, the Alps, and I don't know where all,—with, perhaps, a passing glimpse of Paris as we return, to see if any of our old friends are in existence. What do you say to that?"

"I leave everything to you, Jack," returned Ledbury. "My head is beginning to get into such a whirl, that I shall not be able to think about anything else until we start. But I say, Jack, we shall post sometimes, shan't we?"

"I have told you I will make every proper arrangement," said Johnson, still amused at the

evident desire of Titus to travel in a distinguished manner. "I am not quite sure whether we shall ride at all."

"Why, Jack, we can't walk from London to Milan!" said Mr. Ledbury, aghast with terror.

"Don't distress yourself, Leddy," replied Johnson. "I am going out now to buy some things, and you had better come with me."

And, acting under his advice, Mr. Ledbury set off to make purchases for the voyage—the most important being some very serviceable shoes, and two old soldiers' knapsacks, which were procured after diving into some of the incomprehensible thoroughfares in the neighbourhood of Tower Hill. They also bought two candleboxes, and these in an envelope of ticking, looked very military when placed on the top of the knapsacks; besides being serviceable, as Johnson affirmed, to carry minor articles of the toilet, which could be got at easily, without unstrapping the entire package. And, finally, two stout blouses were ordered, with breast-pockets inside, to contain their passports, and, in Mr. Ledbury's case, the document as well, which was the chief object of their journey. As the outfit was not very extensive, it did not take a great deal of time to get it in readiness; and, after a short, flying visit to Clumpley, made upon the sly, they fixed the day for starting. Previously to this, however, Jack dined with Titus at his father's house; and consider-

ably raised himself in the old gentleman's estimation by the attention he paid to his instructions respecting the business they were going upon, as well as the intelligence he exhibited about all matters connected with their intended route. So that things, upon the whole, looked tolerably cheering; and Jack's spirits rose in proportion, until Titus affirmed that he had never seen him so perfectly like what he used to be since they left Paris.

The sun was shining brightly the next morning, and the Thames quivered and sparkled in the beams as it caught a tint of unwonted blue from the cloudless sky above, when, about noon, Mr. Ledbury and his friend, fully equipped for their intended pilgrimage, climbed up the sides, and stood upon the deck of the good steam-ship, the *Earl of Liverpool*, bound for Ostend. The wind was fair, the tide serviceable, the weather fine, and everything looked lively and animated. Even the old Tower, off which the packet lay, appeared to have become quite juvenile again; and lifted up its numerous turrets amongst the modern warehouses and edifices by which it was surrounded, with an air half supercilious, half companionable; as if it knew its importance and position in architectural society, but wished to appear upon friendly and visiting terms with the adjacent structures of the present day; like some old bachelor, who, whilst he does not think him-



self at all too *passé* to associate with young cavaliers, still cannot help looking down upon them as giddy and inexperienced youths, quite unworthy of his patronage.

In ten minutes the word was given to "go ahead," and the packet moved on. Ledbury and Jack had deposited their knapsacks in an artful corner of the fore-cabin, and took up their positions at the head of the boat as she progressed down the Pool, where they were soon joined by other passengers, some bound upon a tour like themselves, with whom they compared intentions, and proposed lines of journey. To those who had determined ultimately to arrive at Paris, Mr. Ledbury was particularly communicative, speaking with an air of great authority upon everything connected with that capital. But, whilst he was doing this, he could not help thinking how much his mind had expanded, and what a man of the world he had become since that time twelvemonth, when he first started to France with Jack Johnson; how that tour had invested him with those distinguished manners which he always assumed in polite society; and what a close relationship the casual voyage with his friend was likely to lead to. There were some very pleasant people on board, and the time passed cheerfully enough; for the sea was tolerably well behaved, except for the last few hours of the voyage, when, as it got dark, and somewhat chilly,

the majority of the company went below, and plunged into tea, and brandy-and-water, for very distraction.

And then came that monotonous part of the voyage, which all accustomed to long steam-boat travelling can so readily call to mind. The close, confined atmosphere of the cabin, dimly lighted by the lamp in the centre, quivering together with the entire vessel, from every vibration of the engine and paddle-wheel ; the silence of the company, after the previous excitement of the early portion of the voyage, as they lounged about in various uneasy fashions upon the seats, luggage, and even the tables,—a silence continuously broken by the restless tramp of the passengers overhead ; the rush of water along the sides of the boat ; the creaking of every separate piece of wainscoat and timber with her laborious oscillation through the lashing sea, to which the jingling of tea-things and tumblers, in cupboards and lockers, kept up an undying accompaniment ; all this, coupled with the feeling, which could never be entirely dispelled, that the huge ark, crowded with life,—her vast glowing furnaces blazing and roaring, from which a train of bright scintillations flew, whirling off in infernal gambols upon the screeching wind,—was but a speck upon the leaping wilderness of dark and boiling waters,—that her comparative strength was as nothing against

the power of the mighty elements with whom she was at strife.

But, in spite of all discomfort, the night wore away. About two in the morning Johnson and Ledbury went upon deck, when the lights of Ostend were plainly visible a-head, and in another half hour they came alongside the port, where they were received in great form by a deputation of *douaniers*, according to the customary politeness of foreign landing-places. Having merely their knapsacks with them, upon Jack's advice, these were unstrapped and exhibited to the officers, who, perceiving that there was nothing very important in them, allowed them to go at once on shore. This was a great accommodation; for all the rest of the luggage had to remain in the vessel until it was carted up to the custom-house, guarded by patrols with loaded guns, as if the authorities feared the carpet-bags would rise in rebellion, and run away of their own accord without being examined. Their passports were, however, demanded of them; and they were directed to apply for them again at the *bureau*, as soon after six in the morning as they liked.

"Come along, Mr. F.; Susan, look after the children—come along!" exclaimed a very bustling lady, one of the saloon-passengers, as she collected her party, and made a sally along the plank, carrying an enormous bandbox.

"On ne passe pas avec les cartons, madame,"

growled a gendarme, who was watching the egress of passengers ; “ on ne passe pas.”

“ Oui, monssou, oui,” returned the lady, with great amiability, “ c’est tout droit—j’ai ma passe port—je comprend. Now, Mr. F., pray do not leave everything to me ; shew the man the passport.” And the lady moved on again.

“ Non, madame !” thundered the gendarme again, charging the band-box with the butt-end of his firelock ; “ non, madame ; on ne passe pas—pas passeport.”

This final alliteration was beyond all power of comprehension, and the lady remained for an instant in great wrath.

“ I believe, ma’am,” said Johnson, “ he will not allow you to leave the boat with that luggage.”

“ I am perfectly aware of what he means, sir,” replied the lady haughtily. “ Edward ! why don’t you lay hold of Susan ? Take her hand directly, sir. Monssou,” she continued, turning once more to the officer, “ ici sont mes choses du soir, et il me faut besoin beaucoup.”

“ Pouvez-pas sortir avec ces effets,” was all the answer made to this confession, by the guard.

“ Now, ma’m,” cried one of the steamboat’s company, “ I must trouble you to go one way or the other ; you are blocking up the gang.”

“ Did you ever hear of such an imposition ?” exclaimed the lady, in extreme anger, turning round and addressing the passengers generally,

and no one in particular. "To think the many times that I have gone ashore at Ramsgate, and never was I so treated. Never again—no, never any more, Mr. Frazer, will I come to foreign parts."

"I never wished you to, now, my dear," said Mr. Frazer, quietly.

"Ugh!" replied the lady; and forcing her way back to the deck, was soon lost, together with her train, amidst the throng of passengers and luggage.

"Montez, messieurs — à la Grand Hôtel!" cried the driver of a very curious omnibus surmounted by a tin chanticleer, who turned about in all directions, after he had performed a violent concerto upon a bugle.

"Hôtel Bellevue!"

"Bath Hotel, gentlemen and ladies," cried an English voice, which there was no mistaking.

"Which shall we go to, Jack?" asked Titus.

"Devil a one," replied Johnson; "we shall be off to Brussels by the first train. If you think it worth while going to bed at three, to get up again at five, you can choose which hotel you like."

"Ah, I see," replied Mr. Ledbury; "but I am very hungry."

"Well, come in here, then, and we will get something to eat," answered Jack.

Whereupon they turned into the *Maison*

*Blanche*, a public-house situated immediately upon the port, where all the people spoke the English language, and did not particularly object to take English money, after a little persuasion. A shilling covered the expense of some brandy-cherries and the never-failing omelette ; and when they had finished, as day was breaking, and their appetites were somewhat appeased, they agreed to walk about and see what they could of the town.

If all the docks, locks, canals, and basins in and about London were collected together, and upon the banks of these some ingenious architects, who had closely studied the style of the houses contained in the Dutch toy-boxes, were to build various rows and streets of dwellings in the same fashion ; if other industrious people were to paint the aforesaid houses blue, green, and yellow, and employ their leisure time in sowing grass-seed between the paving-stones, and mooring squabby Dutch-built boats against the quays, there to remain perpetually,—when all these things had been accomplished, they would have produced a very good imitation of Ostend. The surrounding land is swampy, and the adjacent water treacherous, particularly when the wind blows off shore ; whilst the town itself, at the best of times dreary enough to suit the most moping of its inhabitants, did not look over lively to Jack Johnson and his companion at that time

in the morning, when nobody was about except the sentinels, and all the white venetian blinds were closely shut. But the mere idea that it was a foreign place, invested it with a certain degree of interest.

“I wonder what that means,” said Mr. Ledbury, as he read over a door the inscription, “VERKOOPT MEN DRUNKEN.”

“The Ostenders are addicted to strong liquors,” replied Jack, “and frequent restraint is necessary. That means, ‘men are cooped up here when they are drunk.’”

“Law!” exclaimed Titus, who for the time took it all in as most veracious information. “They must be a very tipsy people, for I have seen twenty houses with the same notice.”

“They are,” returned Jack; and then, smiling, he added, “no, no, Leddy,—it’s a shame to sell you now,—it’s only the Flemish for ‘allowed to be drunk on the premises.’”

They wandered about the town, seeing all that was to be seen, which was nothing, until the time arrived for them to go and look after their passports. A crowd of people were waiting at the doors of the office, as if they had belonged to a theatre on a benefit night; and when the gate opened, the rush was very great, insomuch that the fierce-looking patrol in attendance was wedged behind the door, against the wall, by the pressure, from which he was quite unable to extricate him-

self. And so he waxed exceedingly spiteful, and swore many incomprehensible foreign oaths, in which thunder and hackney-coaches appeared to play principal parts; nor was his humour lessened by a request, or rather an order, from Jack Johnson, that he would assume a state of rapidly-ascending flame, and keep his powder dry; by which proceedings, and putting his trust in pipe-clay and fireworks, he might eventually prosper; all which advice, being exceedingly figurative, and partaking largely of British idiomatic impertinence, greatly diverted the rest of the travellers, who are ever keenly susceptible of such fun as depends upon putting alien custom-house-officers to any species of discomfort. And when the passports had been delivered, the majority of the passengers went to look after their luggage at the custom-house, and go through another ordeal of wrangling, misunderstanding, and grumbling. But Ledbury and Jack, having literally all they had with them upon their backs, sauntered once more along the quays, and finally sat down upon their knapsacks in front of the post-office, and conversed upon things in general, until the gates of the railway were thrown open for the departure of the earliest train, and they took their places in the cheap "*wagon*," that was to convey them to Brussels.

Their third-class-carriage was soon filled; and



then, upon a signal from one of the conductors, who blew a horn, instead of ringing a bell, the train moved on. They were entirely amongst strangers—peasants in blue blouses, and chubby, fresh-looking Flemish girls, in white caps, who talked unceasingly in some strange language, which even Jack Johnson could make nothing of, leaving Mr. Ledbury entirely out of the question. They did not even see any of their fellow-passengers on board the steamer, although they knew many of them were going on by the train; but the English seldom patronize what is cheap when they travel; and, therefore, all the rest had taken their places in the most expensive carriages, wherein, by associating one with another, and not seeing much of the country they were passing, one of their great pleasures of travelling was obtained. Finding that he could not understand the *patois* of his fellow-travellers any more than they could make out his French, Jack thought the best plan he could go upon was to talk English with a Dutch accent; by which means he occasionally made himself slightly comprehensible, in endeavouring to find out the names of various places which they passed. As for Mr. Ledbury, he made important political observations without talking, the chief point of gratification up to the present time being, that he had seen the name, “COCKERELL, MAKER, LIEGE,”

upon one of the engines, to which he immediately called Jack Johnson's attention, as an evidence of British enterprise in distant lands.

The morning was very fine, and the whole journey remarkably exhilarating; nor had Mr. Ledbury any idea of what a corn country meant, until the train flew by the vast fields of ripening grain, for miles and miles, which sometimes came close to the edge of the line. Here and there the landscape was remarkably English in its appearance; but this was soon dispelled by the proximity of some old Flemish town, with its fortifications and quaint gables; especially at Bruges, where the railway ran through the very centre of the city. They travelled very rapidly, sometimes even quicker than in England; and although Mr. Ledbury, from want of proper rest the night before, occasionally dozed for a few minutes, until his head reclined upon the shoulder of a good-looking *paysanne* who sat next to him, from which it was usually heaved off in a very unceremonious manner, yet he contrived to see a great deal. As for Jack Johnson, he was as lively as ever, want of sleep not appearing to produce the slightest effect upon him; but having found out that the conductor was a Belgian, they immediately had a pipe together and a glass of *schnaps*, which people brought up to the carriages whenever the train stopped; as well as cakes, fruit, and various unknown drinks.

They arrived at Brussels some time before noon, having accomplished the journey from the Tower-stairs considerably under four-and-twenty hours, and, once more shouldering their knapsacks, marched into the city in search of an hotel. The very feeling of being abroad again sufficed to put Jack in the highest spirits, and he addressed all sorts of gallant compliments to the *grisettes* who were standing at the doors of the various shops, and who, if they had not altogether the *tournure* of their Parisian sisterhood, were, in most instances, amazingly pretty. And nothing could exceed the placid benignancy of Mr. Ledbury's smile, as, in his blue Macintosh cap, and spectacles, he marched on with a military air and disembarrassed bearing, as if his knapsack had been a mere nothing, now and then turning a look of mild reproof upon the little boys, who, invariably attracted by his appearance, huzzaed him as he went by, or ran after him in quest of small coin, which he distributed from the pocket of his blouse in the form of English halfpence,—the remnants of the last change he had taken in London.

After wandering about many streets without finding an establishment likely to suit their purpose, they at last pitched upon the Hôtel de l'Union, in the Grand Place, where they took possession of a large cheerful room, overlooking the market, and forthwith ordered a very becom-

ing breakfast. And very delighted were they both when the meal appeared in the old style,—the pure white plates and cups and saucers, the clinking beet-root sugar, the black bottle of *vin ordinaire*, the capital coffee, the undeniable *côtelettes*, and the *p'tite verre* of fine old Cognac to *chasser* the rest down with,—all this, laid out by the fair hands of Mademoiselle Vandercammer herself, the host's pretty daughter, well-nigh drove Mr. Ledbury distracted. Besides, too, it was the period of the *Kermasse*; and, from certain announcements Jack had seen upon the walls, he intended to go that night to a ball outside the barrier,—how natural it sounded!—and once more have a taste of his old life. Indeed, when they had made their toilets, and turned out for a walk in the town, it required a very little stretch of the imagination to fancy themselves once more in Paris, with Jules, Henri, Aimée, and all their other former acquaintances of the Quartier Latin, ready to meet them at every turn of the streets.

## CHAPTER V.

THE TOURISTS PURSUE THEIR JOURNEY ALONG THE RHINE.

THE two days which Ledbury and Jack devoted to the inspection of Brussels and its neighbourhood passed pleasantly enough ; and they saw everything that unceasing activity from six in the morning until nine at night enabled them to do. For, the two great ends of travel being apparently, on the one hand, to progress with moderate speed from any one place to another that fashion may dictate ; and on the other, to visit everything worthy of genteel notice in foreign localities, the English, with laudable economy, are invariably accustomed to combine these two objects, and scamper through museums and galleries as speedily as they traverse the grand *routes*, which is a plan highly to be recommended : inasmuch as it does not allow the intellects time to get dull, but enables travellers to draw admirable comparisons between different places, from the vivid impressions left of the last interesting spot they visited. And, finally, the tour being accomplished, it leaves that agreeable jumble of opinions and re-

collections in the mind, which is so admirably adapted to the general tone of society and conversation at the present day.

Of course, the greater part of one out of the two days was devoted to a visit to Waterloo, from which spot Mr. Ledbury brought many interesting souvenirs of the engagement, thinking himself highly favoured in being able to procure such relics after so great a lapse of time. But he was not aware that in the almanacks of the cottagers round Mont St. Jean might be found the gardening directions, "*Now plant bullets for summer crops ; water old swords for rust, and dig up stocks and barrels,*"—or that the ingenious artificers of Liege were in the habit of exporting numberless eagles, which being duly fledged with mould, and coated with verdigris from bruised grape-stalks, exceeded their original value one hundredfold. Mr. Ledbury only thought of the distinguished effect these souvenirs would have when displayed upon the cheffonier at his Islington home ; and the interest they would excite when admiring visitors were informed that he himself had brought them from the field of battle,—a statement which, for the time, he felt, must associate him with the Duke of Wellington, and the last charge of the Imperial Guard. And he wrote his name in the book at the foot of the steps leading to the summit of the mound, wherein it is still to be seen, with a throbbing heart and an

extra flourish, feeling additional pride because Jack Johnson had just argued down a foreign gentleman, who was endeavouring to prove that the French won the battle beyond all doubt, although the Englishmen, compared to the Emperor's army were as ten to one,—a belief exceedingly prevalent with our “natural enemies.” Jack merely wrote his name down as the “Marquis de Puit-aux-clerics,” (or Clerkenwell,) a title which produced a great sensation in the mind of the keeper of the archives. And then, presenting that individual with a franc, they walked back to Brussels, somewhat tired, just as the setting sun was throwing as many of its beams as it could contrive to do through the dense foliage of the forest of Soigny.

They started again the next morning for Liege—the Birmingham of Belgium—by the railway; and, without any particular adventure beyond the ordinary casualties of travelling, went on from that place by diligence to Aix-la-Chapelle. Not finding anything remarkable to detain them at that dull resort of fashion tumbled into decay, they took advantage of a night-conveyance, which should ultimately deposit them at Cologne, after making a very excellent dinner at the Hôtel du Grand Monarque. The vehicle was not a diligence, nor a broad-wheeled waggon, nor a hackney-coach; neither was it an errand-cart, nor a travelling-show, but it evidently enjoyed an ex-

tensive family-connexion with all these varieties of carriages, and was formed of pieces of each, put together in a very rickety manner, like a composite plate of supper fragments, the day after a party, endeavouring to do duty at dinner for a perfect dish.

There was not a great deal to observe upon the road, principally from the natural reason that the night was pitch-dark; but, nevertheless, Jack Johnson kept all alive with unceasing energy, to the great delight of their fellow-passengers, not one of whom would he allow to think of going to sleep. Besides themselves, there were three travellers in the interior—two Englishmen, and a German,—the latter of whom indulged in a large pipe continuously, and would have preferred sitting with both the windows up, until the rest could have hung their hats upon the smoke, had he not been over-ruled by a majority; when he retired into a corner of the vehicle, and maintained a grave silence during the remainder of the journey; his position, and the fact that he was awake, being alone indicated by the glowing weed in his *meerschaum*, which every now and then lighted up the interior of the vehicle, revealing for an instant the faces of the travellers to each other through the lurid vapour that pervaded it. The Englishmen were two young barristers, who had just been “called”



at the Middle Temple,—rather verdant, but, withal, exceedingly argumentative, as they showed by their conversation, which broke into discussions and wrangling upon every single observation started by either of them, in common with most of their class, who, because quibbling is their trade, think they cannot apprentice themselves too early to its elements.

“Have you ever been to Cologne, sir?” inquired Jack, giving Ledbury a quiet nudge, and addressing the elder of their two compatriots.

“No, sir,—never; at least—that is, I may say—never. Is it worth seeing?”

“The ‘*eau*’ is the chief natural curiosity,” replied Jack. “You will be astonished at the fountains of it in the market-place.”

“God bless me!” exclaimed their companion; “I had no idea that it was a spontaneous production!”

“Oh, yes,” returned Jack. “There are supposed to be immense *strata* of fossil-flowers in the secondary formation below Cologne, which produce it. Are you a chemist, sir?”

“I have attended lectures at the Polytechnic, and Adelaide Gallery,” answered the other.

“Ah, then, of course you will understand me,” said Johnson. “Water is decomposed; its oxygen and hydrogen unite with the carbon of the anthracite it passes through, the three forming

alcohol, which extracts the essence of the fossil flowers, and becoming diluted by springs, bubbles up in the form of proof spirit."

And, having supported his assertion thus far, Jack paused to take a little breath.

"Farina is the chief merchant of it, I believe?" observed the other traveller, after a short pause of bewilderment.

"He has a tolerable share," answered Jack; "but the two great retailers are Gasthaus and Handlung; you will see their names and pump-rooms all over Germany."

"How do you propose going up the Rhine, sir?" asked Mr. Ledbury, wishing to turn the conversation, for fear their companions should begin to smoke, as well as the German.

"We intend to walk the greater part of the way—do you?"

"No," interposed Jack, "we shall go in the 'damp shift.'"

"What an odd name for a steamer that is!"

"Very; but it is the original one. When the boats were first started they were uncommonly leaky and inconvenient, but there were no others, and they were christened by that name. Some of the machinery was so pervious that the vapour came out in a perfect bath, or, in German, *bad*, and these were called 'damn'd bad shifts.' Very like English, is it not?"

“ Remarkably,” replied the other.

“ So is the mail,” continued Jack, “ which they very properly call a ‘ snail-post.’ ”

And as the tourists seemed desirous of receiving all this information, which Jack assured them they would not find in any guide or hand-book ever published, he continued in the same strain, to the great amusement, not unmixed with fear, of Mr. Ledbury ; until, at five in the morning, their conveyance rolled through the narrow, unpaved, offensive—(may we add stinking ?)—thoroughfares of that “ dirty focus of decaying Catholicism,” the city of Cologne. Here the passengers quitted the diligence, having previously shaken the German from a narcotic lethargy into which he had fallen ; whereupon, he forthwith lighted a fresh pipe, and, puffing like a steamer, cleared outwards with his cargo, which was a green paste-board hat-box, bound with yellow ; then, having taken half a turn astern to see that he had left nothing behind, began to go a-head easy, until he was out of sight.

The two Englishmen made a great deal to do about a portmanteau, which was finally discovered to have been left behind at Aix-la-Chapelle, and somebody else’s, who was staying there, brought on by mistake ; and Ledbury and Jack Johnson, once more getting their knapsacks, wished them a pleasant journey, as they started down towards the river.

“ Well,” said Jack, when they were out of hearing, “ I have met many muffs, but—”

And what he would next have said was lost as he turned a corner, and stood with Ledbury upon the quay, alongside of which the steam-boat *Königinn Victoria* was awaiting her cargo, previously to leaving at six o'clock for Coblentz.

Although we have all been told how sweet it is to wander when day-beams decline, and sunset is gilding the beautiful property of the singer for the time being, yet certainly the appearance of the Rhine, as it was now presented to the view of our friends, was anything but particularly captivating, or productive of the saccharine feeling above mentioned. The river itself was todgy and discoloured, the banks were low and uninteresting, and the city appeared to have started into animation from one of the popular semicircular views of spires, cranes, and weathercocks, which we meet with on the sides of eau de Cologne boxes. Jack, who had been part of the journey before, did not expect anything else ; but Mr. Ledbury, who had fancied himself a Rhenish jager ever since he left Aix-la-Chapelle, almost regretting he had not got a pair of green tights and a bugle-horn, to appear distinguished, and who had pictured the Rhine as bordered by a never-ending castled crag of Drachenfels, was somewhat disappointed. He was not singular, however, in this feeling ; for, thanks to the florid

descriptions of enthusiastic travellers, and highly-coloured sketches of picturesque artists, there are few continental show-places which come up to the expectations formed of them by visitors.

The travellers soon began to arrive on board in great numbers, five out of seven being English ; and here Ledbury found plenty of subjects for amusement, as he sat upon a tub with Jack at the fore-part of the vessel and watched their advent, in the different British migratory classes of aristocratic, respectable, and *parvenu*, neither of which grades includes the few strange persons who merely voyage for inclination or knowledge, —travelling, in most cases, being a compulsory pilgrimage, by which the tourists hold their *caste* in society. Some went directly into the cabin, and began to eat and drink ; others took up their stations upon deck under the awning, with maps and panoramas almost as long as the steam-boat, and amused themselves with pricking out the different places, and wondering when they should come to the ruined castles and vineyards. Two or three very exclusive folks got into their carriages, which were upon deck, and remained there the whole journey, to avoid contamination from the inferior classes ; couriers of one party established flirtation with the ladies' maids of another from rumble to rumble ; whilst the Germans lighted mighty pipes, and were soon lost in an envelope of smoke and their own reflections. A

few Englishmen tried to imitate them, but generally the attempt was a dead failure; for the Germans usually incline to pipes, whilst our countrymen prefer cigars,—the latter occasionally removing the weed from their lips, as they blow out the smoke into the air, and look at it; whilst the former puff continuously, never turning to the right or left until the bowl of their *meerschäum* is exhausted.

Ledbury, Jack, and one or two other young men who were roughing it with knapsacks like themselves, took possession of the tubs, and formed a little *coterie* at the head of the boat, where they solaced themselves with various pint-bottles of Moselle during the earlier portion of the journey. For beyond Cologne the banks of the Rhine are not over lively, approaching, in their general character, to that romantic portion of the Thames on the Essex side, between Blackwall and Purfleet, occasionally varied by a melancholy windmill, a few dismal trees evidently in very low spirits, or a drooping village. Indeed, there was nothing in the world to attract their attention until they came to Bonn, except a large bell, of peculiarly annoying powers, which was always rung upon approaching any landing-place, directly in their ears. But at Bonn, where they stopped for passengers, rather a fearful gathering of the great unshaved came down to see the boat arrive, to each of whom Jack Johnson made several

polite bows from his perch on the top of the tub ; and subsequently addressed them upon the state of things in general, his favourite theme, in a speech of vast power, which was only cut short by the steamer once more pursuing her journey.

There was a gentleman amongst their party who particularly took Jack's fancy. He was very slim, and very pensive, with lay-down-collars, and a countenance expressive of an innate disposition something between indigestion and romance. He had a little memorandum-book, with a little pistol pencil-case, and he took rapid views of the different objects on the banks as they presented themselves, in the style of shy outline, and looked poetical, and now and then said " Beautiful !" when there was nothing to be seen but a rickety old boat-house, with an intensity of expression that proved him of no ordinary mind. He did not at first appear to know exactly what to make of Jack Johnson ; but when that facetious gentleman began to tell traditions about the Rhine to the other, calling to mind what he had read, and inventing what he had not, he forthwith treated him with the greatest deference.

" You appear well acquainted with the legends of this lovely river," he said to Jack.

" Know them all, sir," replied Johnson ; " that is to say, all those that are true."

" I believe they sometimes vary in different chronicles," observed the pensive traveller.

“ Oh, very much,” answered Jack. “ I divide the legends of the Rhine into three heads : the *Lyrical*, the *Handbook*, and the *Paid-by-the-sheet*.”

“ And what is the difference ?”

“ Just this : the Lyricals are the short traditions at the head of drawing-room songs. They run thus :—

“ ‘ The celebrated Roland having been reported to have died in Palestine, his betrothed bride took the veil, and retired to the convent of Nonenworth. Upon his return, the brave warrior died of a broken heart. The ruins of Rolandseck, which he built, suggested the following ballad.’

Adapt the legend to some popular operatic air, get the view lithographed for the title-page, and there you have it.”

“ And what is the *Handbook* style, Jack ?” asked Ledbury, quite proud of his friend, although the pensive gentleman looked as if he thought the definition a little too commonplace.

“ Oh ! that has more of the Guide about it,” replied Johnson. “ The tradition is the same ; but it is better suited for persons about to marry, —I mean to travel,—or to do both. It begins—

“ ‘ After leaving the Drachenfels, the river contracts to an accelerated current, on the right bank of which, above the island of Nonenworth, are seen the ruins of Rolandseck. Tradition assigns this stronghold to have been built by Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne, who, being engaged to a lady, &c.,’

and all the rest of it.”



“ And the *Paid-by-the-sheet* ?” asked the pensive gentleman, who was travelling in search of inspiration, in order that he might one day write for an annual.

“ Why,” said Jack, “ the object, then, is to take up the Vauxhall-ham style of composition, and make the subject go as far as it can, with or without plates. You must cut the story remarkably thin in this case, and turn it into a tale, such as —

“ ‘ The last rays of the declining sun were gilding the tower-capped heights of Godesberg, as a solitary horseman, in the costume of an eastern warrior, pursued his lonely journey along the right bank of the majestic Rhine.’

“ Now, you know, all this comes to the same in the end, — that the lady had gone into a convent ; but the object is to cover paper, and so the gold of the legend is beaten out into leaf accordingly. Kellner ! noch eine halbe Flasche Moselwein.”

This particular explanation, coupled with the flourish of German at the end, immediately caused everybody to look upon Jack as a very talented personage, and complimented him thereupon. Whereat Jack drank their respective healths when the wine arrived, and then sang “ The Huntsman’s Chorus,” arranged as a solo, to express his enthusiasm at being on the Rhine, in which Mr.

Ledbury was rash enough to join. But, finding he came in at the wrong place with “ Hark, follow ! ” whilst Jack was defining the chase as a pleasure worthy of princes, he was immediately silent, and evinced great confusion at having thus distinguished himself.

## CHAPTER VI.

MR. LEDBURY'S INSPIRATION, AND JACK JOHNSON'S VERSION  
OF THE LEGEND OF DRACHENFELS.

ALL this time the packet had been gallantly working against the stream ; and before long they were in the midst of the crags and castles which Mr. Ledbury had so panted to look upon. The pensive gentleman, too, wrote several "impromptus ;" and Titus, who believed it severely compulsory upon every one to be inspired, under such circumstances, got a pencil, and the back of a letter, and was for some time occupied apparently in composition, whilst Jack was carrying on conversation with some other travellers.

"What are you after, Leddy ?" asked Johnson, as his companions left him for a short time, to look at some view they were passing.

"Now you'll laugh," said Titus, "if I tell you."

"No, I won't," replied Jack. "Honour bright ! Is it a view ?"

"No, it's a little poem," said Titus. "I

thought it might do for any album I might be asked to write in when I got home. I don't mind reading it, if you won't laugh."

"Go on, sir, pray," said the pensive gentleman.

"Stop ! get up on the tub, and read it properly," said Jack.

Titus, whom Jack could persuade to anything, mounted the tub, and commenced :—

"I call it, My Hoxton Home."

"But you don't live there," interrupted Jack ; "you live at Islington."

"Oh ! hang it, Jack," returned Titus ; "it's near enough,—poetic licence, you know. 'My Hoxton Home,' " he continued, "'Stanzas written on the Rhine.'" And he cleared his voice as he began :—

"My Hoxton home, upon the Rhine——"

"Well, but Hoxton is not upon the Rhine," interrupted Johnson.

"No, no, Jack ; you don't understand ; there's a stop after 'home.' I think 'whilst' is better than 'upon.' Now then :—

"My Hoxton home ! whilst on the Rhine,  
A thought of thee my bosom fills ;  
Its steeps recall the mountain line  
Of Haverstock and Highgate hills.  
I gaze upon thy castled crags,  
Baronial hall, or ladye's bower ;

But memory's chain before me drags  
 Our own dear Canonbury Tower!  
 In fancy still, where'er I roam,  
 I think of thee, my Hoxton Home!"

"Capital! famous!" cried Jack, applauding with an empty bottle against the side of the tub.  
 "Is that all?"

"No," said Ledbury; "here's another verse."

"Fire away then," said Johnson; "we're all attention."

And Mr. Ledbury, encouraged by their praise, continued:—

"The Brunnens which in Baden spring,  
 Their gravell'd walks and flowery paths  
 Warm my bosom—"

"Halloo!" interrupted Jack once more,  
 "there's a foot too short there!"

"So there is," replied Ledbury, counting his fingers. "What can we put instead?"

"'Corazza' 's a good word," said Jack;  
 "'thrill my corazza' reads well; you can take  
 the shirt as symbolical of the heart it covers."

"Now, come Jack, you are joking," said Ledbury, in continuation. "This will do:—

"—and flowery paths  
 Call up in visions, whilst I sing,  
 The City Sawmills' Tepid Baths.  
 The eagles in their sky-built nests,  
 Each guarding his sublime abode

Boast not the grandeur which invests  
The Eagle of the City Road.  
Nor pump-room's dome, nor fountain's foam,  
Can equal thee, my Hoxton Home ! ”

“ Very good, indeed, Leddy,” said Jack patronizingly ; “ we shall see you publishing now, before long.”

“ They are simple,” said Titus, with becoming modesty.

“ Remarkably,” answered Johnson ; in which opinion the pensive gentleman coincided, although silently.

There was now plenty of fine scenery upon either bank to occupy the attention of the travellers ; and it was somewhat laughable to see the eager manner in which those who were taking refreshment below rushed upon deck when any fine view was announced, and, as soon as it was passed, went back quietly to their meal. Mr. Ledbury was principally amused with the manner in which the Rhenish boatmen moved their small craft, which were something between punts and canoes. A man sat at each end with a broad-toothed wooden rake, and as the foremost pulled the water towards him, the hinder one pushed it from him, so that, between the two, the boat made a little progress. The continuity of ruins, also, particularly called forth his admiration ; for now the mountains rose up from the very edge of the river, covered at every available spot with vine-

yards, and in most instances surmounted by the unvarying round tower.

"Those ruins of former feudal times are very interesting," said the pensive gentleman.

"Yes, but they are all alike," replied Jack. "The two tall chimneys at the base of Primrose Hill, and the round shot-manufactory at Lambeth, cut up into lengths, and perched on the top of mountains, would furnish quite as many traditions. They are nearly all the same."

"Would you favour us with one of the legends?" asked the pensive gentleman.

"Certainly," said Jack; "which will you have?"

The choice was left to himself; and, as they had not long passed the scene of the story, Jack drew a MS. book from the pocket of his blouse, and commenced his own version of

### **The Legend of Drachenfels;**

#### **A Lay of the Ancient Rhine.**

KING GILIBALDUS sits at lunch beneath the linden trees,  
But very nervous does he seem, with spirits ill at ease;  
For first of all he rubs this ear, and then he pulls that hair,  
His sandwich and a splendid glass of ale \* he cannot bear.  
Nor aught beside they can provide, because a monster dread  
Has sent to say, without delay, he must the princess wed.

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\* "Crowlisches Altonisches gutes altes bier, mit Butterbrod und Fleisch, zwei silber groschen." (About fourpence English.)

To speak unto his courtiers the monarch does not choose,  
Until that monster has been hung, and they have brought the  
noose.

The monster is a dragon of more hideous shape and mien  
Than any canvass-cover'd, wicker-basket, huge machine,  
That Mr. Bradwell ever built at merry Christmas time,  
To be put on by Payne or Stilt in some gay pantomime.  
A vast aerial courier he—part fish, part beast, part bird,  
A flying ichthyosaurus, of which Mantel never heard ;  
No eye might look upon his form without the deepest awe,  
His maw (or craw) for victuals raw, his jaw, and paw, and claw.

Sir Siegfried the Scaly, one of stalwart form and height,  
(In Germany, all through the year, he was the longest knight),  
The Nibelungen hero, as some call him, Sea-egg-fried,  
Of noble fame, set forth to claim the princess for his bride.  
He rode beneath proud Stromberg's walls, where Gilibald held  
state,  
And kept up his old mansion at a bountiful old rate ;  
Or rather at no rate all, for none would he e'er pay,  
But always told the overseer to call another day ;  
And if the wretched wight returned, they got him in a line,  
Then tied a millstone round his neck, and sent him " down the  
Rhine."

Sir Siegfried the Scaly played a solo on his horn,  
That Puzzi might have envied, but the greeting was forlorn ;  
For that same morn, at break of dawn, the dragon had been  
there,

And carried off the princess, as she walk'd to take the air.  
He wound his tail about her waist, his tail so large and long,  
As restless as repealer Dan's,—in mischief quite as strong.  
Then, like a rocket shooting up, by dint of magic spells,  
He bore her to his mountain-home on craggy Drakenfels.

" Now, welcome, brave Sir Siegfried !" King Gilibald did say ;  
" I am so glad to see you,—more especially to-day.



You may command my daughter's hand, and with it half a crown,  
If you will climb the Drakenfels, and bring her safely down."

The dragon, after dining, was indulging in a nap,  
His tinsel'd head reclining in the poor princess's lap,  
When Siegfried the Scaly, with his good sword Balamung,  
Just ground for the occasion, up the rocky mountain sprung ;  
And for the sword's free use, in troth, there also was just ground,  
The dragon long had been the curse of all the country round.  
But now he jump'd upon his feet, awaken'd by the tread,  
His nostrils belching out fierce flames, to fill the knight with  
dread :

And, but for the opinion that both coarse and low the phrase is,  
We might have said Sir Siegfried was going fast to blazes !

But chivalry and might prevail'd : the dragon soon was slain,  
And Siegfried the princess bore to Stromberg back again.  
The bells were rung, the mass was sung, and, ere the close of day,  
King Gilibaldus to the knight his daughter gave away.  
On those wild heights Sir Siegfried his future home did fix,  
And there a fortress proud, of stone, he built as right as bricks.  
About the ruins which exist each guide his version tells ;  
But this is the correct account of castled Drakenfels.

" Well, but, Jack," observed Mr. Ledbury, as Johnson finished, " all that never happened, you know."

" I can't answer for that," replied Jack ; " it might or it might not. I have my own opinions about it."

The pensive gentleman made no comment upon the legend. It was evident that he did not deem it sufficiently romantic to call forth his approbation ; and he gradually sidled off to the after part of the vessel, where the majority of the

passengers were dining upon deck under an awning, so that Jack and Ledbury were left alone, with the exception of a facetious traveller, of limited intelligence, who came up to them every five minutes, smiling and rubbing his hands, and, after looking amicably at Jack for a few seconds, generally said,

“Well, how do you find yourself by this time?”

To which kind inquiry Jack, who had not been particularly indisposed in the interim, usually replied that he was as well as could be expected, which the traveller appeared to consider a high joke, judging from the sportive manner in which he received the intelligence. Titus, who imagined that he had attracted the attention of a fashionable lady on the box of one of the carriages, assumed several elegant positions, in which he thought his figure might be seen to the best advantage, and even went so far as to call out audibly to the waiter, in German, for another *demi-bouteille* of wine. But, in this daring feat, he was somewhat discouraged by Jack Johnson, who recommended him not to try it again, for fear he should tie his tongue in a knot, and experience some difficulty in undoing it again.

The poetical associations of the river had not affected the corporeal appetites of the passengers, who all appeared to be making excellent dinners,

as they admired the succession of vineyards and cornfields, orchards and villages, frowning mountains, and fertile plains, that quickly followed each other, now smiling in the afternoon sun. Then some of the restraint which had attended the early part of the voyage wore away, and the various travellers began to compare notes of their intended *routes* with each other, or tell anecdotes of former excursions. Altogether, the time passed as pleasantly as well might be, until a bend of the river brought them within sight of the tremendous bulwark of the Rhine, towering formidably above all around it ; and in another twenty minutes the *Königin Victoria* came up alongside the busy landing-quay of double-faced Coblentz, which smiles on the river, and frowns on the land with equal significance.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE GALLANT MANNER IN WHICH MR. LEDBURY ATTACKED  
THE FORTRESS OF EHRENBREITSTEIN.

IT is a very animated scene when the steamers discharge their passengers upon the landing-place at Coblenz; and not the least amusing part of it is the struggle of the touters belonging to the various inns to attract the attention of the visitors, in common with those of all foreign show-places, as well as the exertions of different porters to seize upon the respective luggage; for there is always a perfect stack of gay carpet-bags, worked all over with Berlin wool, on board the Rhenish boats, which require transportation to the various destinations of their owners.

A powerful band of these licensed brigands took possession of the gangway as the boat came alongside the pier; and before long Mr. Ledbury was engaged in a terrific single-handed combat with a German *gamin*, who insisted upon forcibly carrying off his knapsack. The contest was very severe whilst it lasted; but at length Titus gained the victory, and marched up the

platform leading to the quay, with the air of a Peruvian Rolla, in a macintosh cape and spectacles, flourishing his luggage in triumph over his head, in the place of the scared infant who usually personates Cora's child. Jack Johnson followed, laughing heartily at his friend's encounter, and keeping off the other bandits with his stick ; whilst the pensive gentleman gave up his effects at once, without a struggle, and accompanied the others to land.

They went directly to the Hôtel du Géant ; but, finding it was quite full, proceeded along the street in search of another.

"What a curious name for an inn," said the pensive gentleman.

"It is christened after a legend," replied Jack. "Some centuries ago, a giant lived in that very house. Ehrenbreitstein was built to attack him."

"Indeed !" exclaimed the other, as he peeped through the open windows of one of the *salons*, with an air of deep interest. "The rooms are not very large, though."

"The house was not divided into apartments when he lived there," said Jack. "He used to sit with his head out at the skylight, putting his arms and legs through the windows, like the little men outside shows. They say that is the bell he used to ring when he was hungry."

The poetical stranger immediately stopped to make a sketch of the packet-bell, to which Jack

had pointed ; and at this occupation the others, finding that he intended to write a sonnet upon Ehrenbreitstein before he dined, left him, and turned into the open portals of the *Gasthaus Zum Rheinberg*. And, having made their dinner-toilet, which consisted in brushing their hair and taking off their blouses, they were soon seated at one of the pleasant windows of that inn, before a well-spread table, and enjoying a beautiful view of the Rhine and its opposite banks.

The iced hock was so delicious, and so much to Mr. Ledbury's taste, that his poetical inspirations soon returned, and he would have perpetrated several "Stanzas upon a dinner on the Rhine," if his companion had not continually broken in upon his romantic meditations with some everyday remark. As it was, he began to ask Jack if there was any chance of the glow-worm gilding the elfin flower that evening, since he felt very desirous of wandering on the banks of the blue Moselle, beneath the starry light of a summer's night. And, after the second bottle, he went so far as to contemplate sitting upon the banks of the river above the town all night long, in order that if any relation of Lurline felt inclined to take him to her home beneath the water, he might accompany her ; for which sub-aqueous trip he felt perfectly qualified, having formerly subscribed to Peerless Pool, in his native Islington, as well as been down twice in the diving bell

at the Polytechnic Institution, not so much for the actual pleasure he derived from having the drums of his ears tuned during the excursion, as to distinguish himself in the eyes of the company assembled in the galleries, when he came up again.

They had been some time at dinner, so long that the moon was beginning to give the sun a mild notice it was time for him to quit, by just showing her face above the mountains, when they heard the sound of music in the street, and directly afterwards a girl with a guitar made her appearance at the open window. She was very pretty, with a slighter figure, and darker hair and eyes than is common amongst the German women; and she gazed upon Mr. Ledbury with such a captivating expression of her full, lustrous pupil, rendered more bewitching by its dilation in the twilight, that he was almost in doubt whether one of the naiades he had been thinking about had not risen from the Rhine to meet him. Nor was the enchantment at all dispelled when she began to sing with a clear, melodious voice, some popular German air, accompanying herself on the guitar, and, what was more extraordinary, with English words, in which, however, a foreign accent was perceptible. This was too much for Mr. Ledbury, who was always keenly alive to the power of female loveliness, and his spectacled eyes twinkled through the smoke of his pipe with the deepest sentiment,

until, with the combined effects of the hock, the moon, and the music, he put it beyond all question that some baron's daughter upon the Rhine had fallen in love with him, as she saw him pass in the steamer from her father's castle, and had taken this method of disclosing her attachment. With this impression, he was somewhat surprised when, upon the conclusion of the song, the girl came close up to the window, and said in a subdued, mysterious tone,

"Does Monsieur wish to buy any fine eau de Cologne or cigars?"

"None, my love," replied Jack in a very off-hand manner, as he produced a full tobacco-*blague*, in size somewhat less than a carpet-bag.

"Any gloves, brooches, *kirschwasser*?" again asked the singer.

"No, no, you gipsy, none!" returned Jack. "There, run along," he continued, throwing her some small coin; "go on to the Géant. They have no end of travellers there, and all English—think of that!"

As the girl smiled at Johnson, and withdrew, Mr. Ledbury's face crimsoned with shame and confusion at the very unceremonious manner in which he imagined she had been treated by his friend. For he had imagined that her appeal to his commercial generosity, was a delicate *ruse* to obtain an interview; and when he saw Jack answer her in such an unconcerned manner, and give her



such a trifling amount of coin, he felt assured that her feelings were deeply hurt, and that she had left in painful humility. So, without saying a word, he started up from the table ; and hurrying out of the room with a precipitation, which at first gave the people of the hotel some slight reason for thinking that his ideas of payment for what he had regaled upon were rather indistinct, he followed the fair *minnesinger*, whom he overtook just as she was entering the adjacent hotel, leaving Jack Johnson completely amazed at his excitement. But the spirit of chivalry held an equal sway over Mr. Ledbury's actions with the spirit of wine ; and the combination of the two, acting upon his natural bland and gentle idiosyncrasy, led him to the commission of most of those daring feats of benevolent gallantry, which it has been our happy lot to chronicle.

He returned in a minute or two, in a very volcanic state, with his head looking as if it only wanted a knock to make it go off with a bang, like a detonating ball, and evidently upon the point of communicating some most important fact to his friend, as he exclaimed,

“ I say, Jack ; what do you think ? ”

“ Well, I can't say,” replied Johnson ; “ what is it ? ”

“ She has promised,” said Mr. Ledbury, impressively, “ to sell me——”

“ I don't doubt it,” interrupted Johnson.

“Now, Jack, you always make such fun of things ! She has promised to sell me some real eau de Cologne at half-price, if I will go for it after dark ; and where to, do you suppose ?”

“I don’t know,” said Jack ; “perhaps where glory waits thee, or to Bath.”

“No, no,” replied Titus, half vexed ; “she will meet me—there !”

And with a very melodramatic expression, he pointed to the opposite side of the river, where the mighty batteries were snarling from the mountain, adding heroically,

“There ! in the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein !”

“Why, you are cracked, Leddy,” said Johnson ; “what are you talking about ? You are not going anywhere, surely ?”

“Of course I am,” returned Mr. Ledbury, somewhat offended. “Think of the romance of the adventure—an appointment on the Rhine, and at Ehrenbreitstein ! It’s beautiful ! I shall go, and you shall accompany me.”

Johnson replied :

“If I do I ’m—”—and here he hesitated an instant—“I ’m only anxious to see that you get into no scrape. I think you had better not go.”

“Excuse me, Jack,” answered Titus. “I would not lose the adventure for the world, and you shall share it.”

And Jack, in return, seeing that his friend was

bent upon doing something foolish, from which nothing would turn him, consented to accompany him ; then, having finished their wine, they strolled towards the Moselle bridge, and, hiring a small boat, amused themselves with rowing about the river, as well as they were able with the rude oars, until the time which Mr. Ledbury had fixed for his appointment.

At length the last glow of sunset, which had long lingered on the horizon, faded away behind the purple hills, and darkness crept over the Rhine. Lights appeared in the windows of the town, as well as in some of the lazy craft that were lying against the quays, the reflection quivering in long vivid lines upon the tranquil river. Everything was hushed and silent, except the occasional roll of drums upon the opposite side, or the cry of warning from the boatman as he guided his apparently endless raft of wood down the stream.

“ I think we will go now,” said Mr. Ledbury ; “ it is about the time. We can pull across, and that will save us going round by the bridge of boats.”

Resolved to humour him in whatever he wished, Jack followed all his directions, and in a few minutes their craft touched the foot of the mountain on the other side, immediately under the fortress. Possibly, at this minute, if John-

son had proposed to return, Mr. Ledbury would have offered no opposition: but, as it was, he stepped on shore with an air of great bravery.

"I know where to go," said Titus. "She told me I should see a light in one of the windows of the battlements."

"Now, don't be a fool, Leddy, and spend all your money in trash," courteously observed his friend.

"No, no, Jack. You had better wait here to mind the boat. Good-b'ye—I shan't be long."

And beginning to ascend the bank, which at this precise spot rose rather abruptly from the water, Mr. Ledbury contrived to whistle some random notes of an impromptu air, indicative of determination and the absence of fear, whilst Jack sat down quietly in the boat, wondering what Titus intended doing, to await his return.

There was very little light to enable him to see his way clearly, but Mr. Ledbury, sustaining himself by the idea that he was a spirited young traveller carrying out an adventure of gallantry, scrambled up the mountain immediately under the fortified walls, towards where he imagined the beacon was shining for his guidance. Now and then, to be sure, he felt slightly nervous, in spite of all his romance, as he heard the passing tread of the sentinel upon the ramparts over his head, or found himself unexpectedly in the exact line of some mighty piece of ordnance that bristled

from the battlements ; but he soon got beyond these, going up higher and higher, until he looked down upon the lamps of Coblenz and its opposite suburb, far beneath him, and glistening in the river.

At last he came to the window, or rather, the glazed embrasure, at which, to all appearances, the fair contrabandist was to meet him. As he listened intently he could plainly hear the notes of a guitar in the interior of the building ; which was a small fort, connecting two curtains of the works. But he would not trust himself to make any vocal signal, so he scraped together a handful of dust, and threw it against the window, which was a little higher than his head. There was no reply, nor did the music cease, and Mr. Ledbury, thinking his projectile was not forcible enough, collected a few small pebbles, and again cast them at the pane, one of somewhat larger dimensions than the rest being included by mistake in the handful, which immediately cracked the glass. But the attempt had succeeded, for the guitar was suddenly hushed, and a shadow passed quickly across the window.

“ She comes ! ” thought Titus, approaching closer to the window by climbing up the steep slope of turf that led to it. And placing both his hands upon the sill, he raised his head to a level with the glass, when the casement opened, and he found himself face to face, not with the

lady-minstrel he had expected, but a gaunt Prussian soldier, of terrific aspect, and cast-iron visage, who savagely demanded in German, "who went there?"

It needed no effort of volition on the part of Mr. Ledbury to loose his hold of the sill, for he dropped down the instant his gaze encountered that of the terrible stranger, as if he had been shot; and coming upon the slanting bank, of course lost his footing as well, and bundled down into the pathway. The sentinel, who ought to have been upon guard outside the building, but had been attracted by the music of the guitar-girl—for she was there, belonging in reality to the canteen,—in the surprise of the instant, and before anything could be explained, seized his firelock, and discharged it out of the window to give the alarm, not knowing but that Mr. Ledbury might be the chief of some revolutionary party intending to attack the fortress. Titus, who expected nothing of a milder character than the simultaneous explosion of fifty mines immediately beneath him, started up at the report; and, as it was answered from above, set off down the steep track as fast as his long legs would carry him. But, had a chain of wires connected everybody in the fortress with a voltaic battery, the alarm could not have been more sudden and general; for before the echoes of the first gun had

well died away, a roll of drums broke out apparently from every direction at once, beating an alarm ; and a confusion of hoarse and awful challenges rang from every angle of the fortifications.

On went Mr. Ledbury, like an avalanche, driving the gravel before him with his heels, until the big stones bounded down the hill, bringing fifty others along with them, which increased the general clatter. On he went, taking such strides that those remarkable boots of the fairy chronicles would have dwindled into ordinary highlows by comparison ; and onward, to all appearance directly at his heels, came the tumult after him. In what direction he was flying he had not the least shade of an idea : he only knew that he was going down the mountain, and that the descent must eventually lead him to the river.

Which it did most literally. The distance was nearly accomplished, and ten strides more would have brought him to the bottom of the hill, when a tuft of turf, upon which he placed his foot, gave way beneath him, and he was directly thrown off his legs. But this did not arrest his progress, for the declivity was very rapid ; and, after sliding a short distance upon his back, he began to roll head over heels down the slope, with a fearful velocity that no living clown could have contested, in the most bustling physical

pantomime ever put upon the stage. Every effort to stop his course was in vain. He went on, turning all ways at once, like a roulette ball, until the last piece of ground was cleared, and, with a final wild clutch at nothing, he threw a concluding somersault, and plunged into the cold, dark waters of the Rhine, which roared in his ears with deafening riot, as he sank directly to the very bottom of the river,—a matter of six or seven feet in depth.

He never knew precisely what followed ; but, adapting a favourite passage from various novelists whose works he had read, he was heard to say, “ that it was one of those moments when the sensations of years are concentrated into the intensity of a single second.” Jack Johnson, upon the very first alarm, had pushed the boat just away from the shore, to be ready for a start ; and to one of the rakes used to propel it was Titus principally indebted for his preservation, being fished up thereby almost as soon as he touched the water ; for he had luckily fallen in close to the spot he started from.

They immediately crossed the river, and succeeded in landing quietly at the foot of the Moselle Bridge ; whilst the alarms were still rapidly following one another at the fortress. As the distance increased between the scene of tumult and themselves, Mr. Ledbury somewhat regained



his intellects, and considering a good retreat next to a downright victory, almost imagined that he had been performing a glorious feat of courageous enterprise. As soon as they touched the opposite shore, they settled for the craft with the owner, who had been waiting about some little time to receive them; and then, for fear Mr. Ledbury's saturated appearance should attract the attention of the bystanders, who were now thronging the quays, and discussing the probable cause of the excitement at Ehrenbreitstein, they returned directly to their hotel. Here Titus immediately proceeded to his sleeping apartment, and went to bed, leaving Jack to superintend the drying of his garments,—the knapsack not allowing an entire change of clothes,—which duty his friend divided with paying compliments to the pretty French *soubrette* of a family that was staying in the house, and learning from the cook the best way of dressing *pommes de terre frites*, in which he intended to instruct Emma on his return, and give old Mr. Ledbury reason to imagine that he was of a domestic turn of mind.

To avoid all unpleasantness, and perhaps detention, they determined to leave Coblenz early the next morning. And Titus also made a resolve not to have anything more to say to singing smugglers of the softer sex, although his first adventure with one had terminated by convincing

him of a fact upon which he had previously entertained some doubts: and this was, that the bottom of the Rhine is not a world of crystal caves and lovely nymphs, as legends had heretofore taught him to believe, but rather a bed of black mud, relieved by mosaics of old shoes and dilapidated pipkins.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DE ROBINSON JUNIOR HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH MR.  
PRODGRERS.

EVERYTHING in London now indicated that the train of gaiety which had characterised the last four months, was rapidly approaching its terminus, and the close of the season was arriving. One by one the shutters closed their gilded panels upon the drawing-rooms of the far-west dwellings, and the blinds were enveloped in aged copies of the morning newspapers. The Opera advertised its last night, and then its stars dispersed to all points of the compass, wherever the engagements chanced to be most magnetic; whilst the foreign gentlemen forsook the glowing pavements of Regent Street and Leicester Square, for the unknown haunts of northern suburbs, wherein they put off the toilet of display for the costume of obligation, reversing the order of entomological existence, and changing at once from the butterfly to the grub.

The chain of society was now broken, and its limbs scattered far and wide. The inhabitants of Belgrave Square removed to Florence and

Naples, whilst those of Finsbury Circus sought the lodgings and *pensions* of Margate or Boulogne. The moors, the lakes, the vineyards, and the glaciers, each found their visitors. Some retired to their own country residences; others hired cottages on a line of railway. Lower down in the scale of migration, people wishing to be "out of town,"—an indefinite locality, which answers equally as well to Rome as Ramsgate,—took simple lodgings within the transit of an omnibus; and even melting clerks, who knew not what a long vacation meant, after being caged from ten to four in some dark office of the city lanes, hopped from their perches as the clock struck the looked-for hour, and rushed to the terminus of the Blackwall Railway, where plenty of rope was allowed them to arrive at Brunswick Wharf in time for a Gravesend steamer, that should at last deposit them upon the welcome piers of Terrace, Town, or Rosherville.

Of course the De Robinsons, of Eaton Place, were amongst the first to leave London; not so much from want of change, or because they liked the country, as for the reason that other people did so. Mr. De Robinson was a fashionable lawyer; and, according to the usual custom of lawyers, from the day when that celebrated member of the profession—albeit an anonymous one—swallowed the oyster which his clients were contending for, was now benefiting himself by

the disputes of others. For whilst two of his employers were waiting for his decision respecting a furnished cottage, situated in Chancery and Surrey, he thought the best thing that could be done, was for his family to inhabit it themselves, by which means everything would be nicely taken care of, and kept well-aired. And so, although Mrs. De Robinson and her daughter talked much of Weisbaden, and more about Interlachen, they found economy finally triumph over inclination, and their continental dreams awaken to the realities of a country villa-residence, on the banks of the Thames within a lunch-and-dinner-*entr'acte* drive of Clumpley. And here, after some little demur, they finally settled; young De Robinson coming to the conclusion that it was not so bad after all, because, being upon the river, he could invite those of the Leander men, whom he knew, to pull up, and see him.

Their family circle was also increased by Mrs. De Robinson's aunt, Mrs. Waddleston, who was staying for a short period with them. She was a very remarkable personage, and almost tempted one to believe in the existence of cast-iron old ladies, so tough and healthy was her constitution. She had no fixed place of residence, but lived chiefly in steam-boats, first-class carriages, and hotels, occasionally staying with her friends, and sometimes disappearing from their eyes for months together; after which she would once more be-

come visible, and exhibit curiosities that she had brought from the Pyrenees or Norway, as well as having been half way to the top of Mont Blanc, in Savoy, and very nearly to the bottom of the coal-mines at Whitehaven. She knew the Red Book by heart, and the genealogy of almost every person, who had one, in the Court Guide; and was upon speaking terms with several great people, which made the De Robinsons pay her every attention. But besides this, she was very well off, which chiefly accounted for her independence, keeping her carriage independently of her travelling, and never paying taxes for it, although the collectors were constantly dodging her about all over the United Kingdom, to see where she lived, without ever finding out. And, above all, having no relatives so near as the De Robinsons, who expected to receive all her property, they evinced their gratitude in anticipation by the most affectionate devotion, listening to all her long stories, and admiring everything she proposed.

They had been settled some weeks, and everybody had called upon them,—the medical legion of the neighbourhood being, of course, the first to leave their cards,—then the petty gentilities, and lastly the cautious ones, who hung back from making any advances towards familiarity, until they saw who and what the new comers were,—

when Mrs. De Robinson thought it was time to return the numerous invitations with which they had been favoured. As the cottage was comparatively a small one, a set evening party was out of the question; and it was therefore arranged that they should give a *fête champêtre* in the grounds, which were tolerably extensive, when many more guests could be accommodated. And there were a great many to be asked, their connexion being already very extensive, since nobodies in town become very great people in the country. We do not mean to say exactly that the De Robinsons were nobodies; for their connexions were respectable, and people knew their relations; but they were nothing beyond the common sphere of middling London Society, although they tried very hard to soar above it. But this is seldom profitable task, for, Icarus-like, the nearer the *pseudo*-votaries of fashion approach the sun, the more treacherous does the wax become that constitutes the body of their wings, and when the fall does take place, it is sudden and violent indeed.

Invitations are not often refused in the country, and nearly everybody accepted, including Mrs. Ledbury and Emma, who were both at Clumpley, and were to be driven over by Mr. John Wilmer. And then it became incumbent upon the De Robinsons to lay down some schemes

for the amusement of their guests, at which council all the family assisted, including Mrs. Waddleston.

"Of course there must be Chinese lamps and fireworks," observed the old lady authoritatively.

"Lord Fulham always has lamps and fireworks."

"Oh! fireworks, of course," said young De Robinson, "and, I should say, ballet-girls."

"Eustace!" exclaimed Mrs. Waddleston, in tones of amazement, "what are you talking about?"

"I know, aunt," replied the young gentleman: "'groups of *ballerine* to promenade the grounds,' as they used to say in the bills of the Vauxhall masquerades: you never saw them, though, when you got in. I beg your pardon for the interruption."

"I do not see the policy of having any young dancing females," said Mrs. De Robinson.

"But you *must* have some strange people dispersed about," replied her son. "It will be very flat if you do not."

"Yes, there you are right," observed Mrs. Waddleston. "When I was at the *fête* given at the Countess Pigeoni's, several wonderful characters were engaged. I remember there was a wizard, who conjured all the plate from the table in the marquee."

"The difficulty is to find out where these individuals live," said Mrs. De Robinson.



“Not at all, mother,” returned Eustace. “John Barnard told me that he knows a friend of young Ledbury’s, named Johnson, who is up to everything of the kind. Suppose I apply to him.”

As Mrs. Waddleston appeared to think this a good plan, of course her relations were immediately delighted with it; and it was therefore agreed that Eustace should proceed to London the following morning to order fireworks, bring down various things from the town-house, and, having got Mr. Johnson’s address, to make arrangements for the ensuing entertainments.

The next day at noon, Mr. De Robinson, junior, was threading the, to him, wild regions of Clerkenwell, and, by dint of much patient investigation and inquiries, at last entered the street which had been whilome graced by the medical establishment of Mr. Rawkins. But the name was gone; and, after walking several times backwards and forwards in much uncertainty, he thought it best to apply at the only doctor’s shop he saw in the thoroughfare, which he accordingly entered for that purpose.

A small, ill-clad urchin, wearing an enormous coat, the tails of which trailed far away upon the ground behind him, like the train of a state-robe, and upon whose face inferences of hunger and evidences of dirt might be found in equal proportions, had been apparently putting up

screws of Epsom salts in blue paper, but was now taking a little relaxation by dancing Jim along Josey behind the counter. To judge from the surprise which he exhibited as the visitor entered, and the sudden check that his operatic ballet received, it was not often that the surgery was troubled with patients.

“Can you tell me where Mr. Rawkins lives?” inquired Mr. De Robinson.

“Wishes I could neither,” was the reply of Bob; for it was, indeed, the small assistant. “He run away two months ago.”

“Oh!” said Mr. De Robinson, taking a minim rest. “And where’s Mr. Johnson?”

“He’s gone, too. I thinks it’s athurt the Ingies; leastwise I don’t know.”

Well, thought the visitor; there does not appear to be much information to be got here. “Can you tell me where I can see anybody who knows Mr. Johnson?” he continued, once more addressing Bob.

“Mr. Prodgers.”

“And where is he?”

“He went to the mill yesterday with Chorkey: he’s a-grinding to-day.”

Not exactly comprehending under what particular category these occupations would fall, Mr. De Robinson was compelled to elaborate his inquiries, by which process he finally learnt that Mr. Prodgers was “grinding” for his examina-

tion, and he also ascertained the place of his abode, towards which he now proceeded.

The residence which Mr. Prodgers shared with several of his fellow pupils, was situated in a small street lying somewhere between Burton Crescent and Gray's Inn Road, of a modest and unassuming appearance, with a triad of names upon the door-post, surmounted by bell-knobs, and a scutcheonless hole for a latch-key in the door, which bespoke, by its worn and dilated aperture, the late hours kept out of the house by the inmates. It was a little time before Mr. De Robinson's knock was answered ; but at last he contrived to be let in by somebody who chanced to be coming out ; and by their direction mounted to the top story, finding there was nobody to take up his card. But, on entering the room, which bore undeniable traces of pertaining to a student of the healing art, he was surprised to find it unoccupied, although several hats were lying about, which gave evidence that the lodgers must still be upon the premises, since the general appointments did not harmonise with the idea of a plurality of gossamers. He was about returning, to make additional inquiries, when, upon passing the door of the bedroom, a strain of indistinct melody fell upon his ear, and caused him to stop. The door was open, and upon looking in, he perceived a table in the middle of the room, upon which was placed a deal box, the

structure evidently forming the approach to an open trap-door in the ceiling, down which the harmony proceeded. To Mr. De Robinson's West-end ideas, all these arrangements betokened rather a singular style of receiving visitors; but, as there was no other plan left, he climbed up the rather treacherous elevation, and put his head through the aperture, to see what was going on.

Upon the level part of the house-top, between the slopes of the roof, three or four gentlemen were assembled in great conviviality, and costumes of striking ease and negligence, apparently combining, from the evidences that were scattered about, the study of anatomy with the discussion of the commingled. Higher up, and prevented from sliding down the slant of the roof by getting behind a chimney, was Mr. Prodgers, at this precise moment superintending the elevation of something important from the ground below, which was also attracting the attention of the others, so that they did not at first see the new comer. But when the object of their solicitude, which proved to be a large can, was landed upon the coping, Mr. Prodgers turned his head, and observed Mr. De Robinson half way through the trap.

“How d'ye do, sir?” said Mr. Prodgers, with great *bonhomie* and open-heartedness. “Who are you?”

The visitor was somewhat taken aback by this off-hand question, which did not exactly accord with his own notions of etiquette ; but he thought it best to be very polite, so he answered,

“ I wished to see Mr. Prodgers. I fear I am intruding.”

“ Not at all, sir, — not at all,” returned the other. “ Give me your hand. Now then — up — there you are !”

And, thus speaking, he half assisted, half dragged Mr. De Robinson through the aperture, who had some difficulty in keeping his footing upon the bevel of the roof, — but, as soon as he felt safe, observed,

“ I took the liberty of calling upon you to know if you could tell me anything of Mr. Johnson : my name is De Robinson.”

“ Oh ! — you are a friend of Ledbury’s—very glad to see you. These fellows’ names are Tweak — that’s Tweak in the gutter — and Simmons, and Simmons’s brother, and Whitby. I’m Prodgers ; and, now we all know one another, have some beer.”

As Mr. Prodger spoke, he handed the can containing the commingled to Mr. De Robinson. But as that gentleman seldom drank malt liquor, except sometimes mixed with ginger-beer, when he was with some of the Leander men on the river, he politely refused it.

“ Perhaps I may offer you some wine,” said

Mr. Prodgers, "Would you like a glass of cool claret, — sherry, — maderia?"

"Thank you, — no," replied the visitor.

"Well, that is fortunate," resumed Mr. Prodgers, "because we haven't got any, only it is right to ask. You'll excuse our free and easy manner: it's our way."

Mr. De Robinson bowed in token of acquiescence.

"By the way, I remember," continued Mr. Prodgers, speaking with the air of a connoisseur in wines, "I have a glass of fine old Cape down stairs, a dry, fruity wine, that has been three weeks in bottle—may I offer you that?"

"You are very polite," said Mr. De Robinson, faintly smiling. "I never drink Cape."

"We do, now and then," said Mr. Prodgers; "fifteen shillings a dozen. Cape of Good Hope we call it, because it may be better some day. I wish you would have some beer."

Thinking it best to accede to his wish, Mr. De Robinson took the proffered pewter, and bowing to the company, put it to his lips.

"This is a remarkably singular spot to meet in," said he, as he finished.

"Ah! you are not used to be on the tiles," said Mr. Prodgers; "we are. We all live on the top floors in this row, and so we get together here by the copings. It's more convenient than

going down into the street, and up again, and saves coats."

Mr. De Robinson looked at the costume of his new acquaintances, and agreed with Mr. Prodgers. For their *tournure* formed a strong contrast to his own, in his low shirt-collar, thin boots, attenuated neckerchief, and lavender gloves.

"Jack's gone abroad with Ledbury," said Mr. Prodgers. "But, if you will tell me what you wanted with him, perhaps I can do as well, —unless you have come to hunt up tin," he added, after an instant's pause.

"Oh, no; nothing of that kind," said Mr. De Robinson. "The fact is, my mother is about giving a *fête* at Clearwell, and we heard that Mr. Johnson could put us in the way of hiring some persons to assist at it."

"What, sham servants, green-grocers, milkmen—"

"No, no," interrupted the other; "queer people to exhibit."

"I see," said Prodgers; "what they call *artistes*?"

"I have it," exclaimed Mr. Tweak, with the energy of inspiration. "There's a man in the accident-ward at the Middlesex, who was once a 'Whirlwind of the Wilderness' in some travelling circus, and afterwards a cab-driver. He's up to all those dodges."

This appeared such an eligible opportunity of obtaining the desired information, that Mr. De Robinson immediately requested Tweak to be kind enough to interest himself in it. And, at the same time, he begged to offer the present company generally an invitation to the *fête*, should they think it worth coming so far to attend.

Mr. Simmons and his brother, who were going up to "the Hall" next week, tendered a polite refusal, which did not altogether grieve Mr. De Robinson, as they were not exactly *fête* men; but Prodgers and Tweak, who had still two months' grace before they underwent the ordeal, accepted the invitation at once, and promised to do all in their power to rout up some marvellous assistants, at the least possible outlay. And then, after their visitor had remained a short time with them, for the sake of appearances, so as not to have the look of going away as soon as he had got all that was wanted, he took his leave; being once more assisted through the trap, and even escorted down to the street-door by Mr. Tweak, with very great courtesy.

"I tell you what, Tweak," said Mr. Prodgers, as his friend returned, "I can see there is a great deal of fun to be got out of this trip. Let the commingled circulate."



## CHAPTER IX.

THE CARAVAN OF WONDERS SETS OUT FOR CLUMPLEY.

VERY early the next morning Mr. Prodgers and his fellow-student sought the bedside of the "Whirlwind of the Wilderness," in the ward of the hospital, in the hopes of obtaining information relative to the usual haunts and habits of such wonderful people as might be thought eligible to assist at the *fête*. The man, now laid up with a broken arm, had been successively a Bounding Bedouin, a Styrian Stunner, a Chinese Convolutionist, and other surprising foreigners, and was quite calculated to tell them all they wished, as well as to put them up to what he thought would be the lowest rates of engagement. And so industrious were the *entrepreneurs*, acting upon his suggestions, that, after diving into strange localities, which none but policemen, and medical students accustomed to out-door obstetric practice in low neighbourhoods would ever have invaded, they got together three wonderful men, who could throw fifty consecutive summersets, stand upon each

other's heads, and tie themselves in double-knots ; as well as a Wizard of the Nor'-nor'-west, who borrowed sixpences from the crowd, put them in his eyes, made them come out at his ears, and finally lost them altogether, beyond recovery. Mr. Prodgers captured a Fantoccini which he saw exhibiting on Clerkenwell Green ; and Mr. Tweak, in one of his nocturnal meanderings amongst different taverns, engaged a gifted foreigner, who imitated skylarks, sang curious airs, played the trombone upon a broomstick, and did various other amazing things, too numerous to be expressed in the limits of any handbill. And then, as these natural curiosities had to be transported, carriage free, to Clumpley, the next question was, how they were to go. To effect this, Mr. Prodgers struck out a bold scheme to be pursued, which none but himself or Jack Johnson would have hit upon.

Unaided, and alone, he sought the distant regions of St. George's Fields, and there, at the end of the Westminster Road, in a colony appropriated to pyrotechnists, spring-vans, and philanthropical institutions, he hired a vehicle ; for in such districts are they to be found. It was not a common van, or waggon, but a regular downright travelling show, chastely painted externally, red and yellow picked out with green, and fitted up within in a style of the greatest convenience. There was a brass fire-place in the corner ; lock-

ers all round the sides, to keep snakes in, and for the spectators to sit upon ; a sliding trap in the roof, to let the air in or out, as might seem advisable ; and a grand chintz curtain, to draw across the apartment, and veil the mysteries of the exhibition from curious eyes. He next sought out the man who had taken the "Tourniquets" to Ascot, and stipulated with him for a pair of horses, and his own services as driver ; and, finally, returned in high feather, to tell Mr. Tweak what he had done, proposing that, when they had collected their troop, they should leave London the day before the *fête*, and work their way down, stopping to exhibit wherever it seemed desirable.

"Why, you don't mean to say you are going to keep a show ?" exclaimed Tweak, in the amazement of the first disclosure.

"To be sure I do," replied Prodgers ; "it will be the greatest dodge ever contrived. Nobody knows us on the road, and we may pick up some tin !"

Mr. Tweak, truth to say, did not see his way very clearly, but his friend appeared in such high spirits about the certain success of the speculation, that he promised to say or do anything he was told, provided he was not expected to tumble on the platform outside.

The intermediate time passed in plans and preparations for the journey, and at last the important day arrived. At an early hour Mr.

Prodgers had collected his forces over the water, in the neighbourhood of the place from which he had hired the caravan. They were all punctual, except the two professional gentlemen attached to the fantoccini; and they had preferred doing a little upon their own account down the road, for which purpose they had started very soon that morning. But this had been done by permission of Mr. Prodgers, who began to assume the air of a theatrical lessee; and with the express understanding that they were to rejoin the caravan at a particular spot, because the drum and pandæan pipes constituted their sole band, and were essentially necessary to the undertaking.

Last of all, Mr. Prodgers hired, in addition to the caravan, a speaking-trumpet of unearthly proportions, and two enormous pictures of fat girls and boa-constrictors, to be hoisted up in front, which he said resembled a real travelling exhibiton, the more from having nothing in the world to do with what was inside. And then, mentally vowing to discard every thought of Apothecaries' Hall, hæmoptysis, and the decompositions of the Pharmacopœia, from his brain for three days, he begged Tweak do the same; and forth they started in the highest spirits, one thing alone tending to lessen their hilarity, and this was, that Jack Johnson and good-humoured Mr. Ledbury were not of the party.

The three wonderful men who could tie them-

selves in knots, and who termed themselves the "Children of Caucasus," set off first, preferring to walk and smoke short pipes, having put their bundles in the lockers. On the box of the caravan were seated the driver, who had orders not to go more than five miles an hour, and at his side the foreign Siffleur, who kept him in one continuous trance of admiration by gratuitous specimens of his ability. Inside were Mr. Prodgers and Mr. Tweak, sitting with the door open, that they might see the country as they lumbered on; and behind the curtain was the Wizard, who had partially shut himself up to arrange some of his wonderful deceptions, which being finished, he came and joined the other two; whilst on either side was an attendance of little boys, who ran by the show out of London, in the hope of peeping into the interior; sometimes producing a little temporary excitement by turning over upon their hands and legs like wheels,—it might be in the idea of getting an engagement,—or pitching one another's caps, when they had them, through the open windows, or on to the roof of the caravan. And in this fashion they progressed along the Kennington Road, and finally arrived at Wandsworth, where the horses rested for a short time.

"Well, Mr. Crindle, have you arranged all your traps to your satisfaction?" said Mr. Prodgers to the Wizard as he joined them.

"Quite right, sir, and ready for anything,"

was the reply of the necromancer, who, out of his magic garments, looked something between an actor and a butler out of place.

“What are you going to do with that barley, Crindle?” asked Mr. Tweak.

“That’s for the Well of Diogenes,” replied the Wizard, majestically. “It’s a fine art, conjuring is, ain’t it, sir?”

“Uncommon!” answered Prodgers, drawing a congrave along the sole of his shoe; “so’s cock-fighting and the cold water-cure.”

“But, as I told a gent the other day, it ain’t thought enough of,” continued the Wizard Crindle, who was evidently an enthusiast. “It’s the patents that burke it. Shakspeare’s all very well in his way; but he couldn’t do the doll-trick. What’s Macbeth to the pancake done in the hat, or the money in the sugar-basin? Answer me that, now—what’s Macbeth to them?”

“Oh, nothing,” replied Mr. Tweak: “a great doo.”

“Of course,” observed the Wizard; “but Shakspeare’s going down, sir; he’s not the card he used to be; the people begin to cut him, and he’ll be at the bottom of the middle pack before long. Then they’ll do the real legitimate thing, and no mistake.”

“Have you been a conjuror long?” inquired Mr. Tweak.

“A necromancer, sir, all my life,” was the

answer, "and my father before me; only he came the common hanky-panky line more than the high delusions. I may say that I was born with a pack of cards in my hand."

"What an interesting case to have attended," observed Mr. Prodgers over his pipe. "Are those the identicals?"

"One of those remarkable anomalies of nature, which are ever rising to perplex the physiologist," remarked Mr. Tweak, gravely, and quoting from one of his lectures. "I should say those cards were worth any money for a museum."

"No, sir,—about fifteenpence," answered the Wizard, innocently, whilst he pinched the cards together, and then made them fly from his hand, one after the other to different parts of the interior.

The caravan went leisurely on, now creeping up a steep hill, anon winding round the boundaries of a park, and then turning off from the highway into some fresh green lane, between fields where the yellow sheaves of corn were drying in the sun, or being carted in creaking waggons to the homestead. Mr. Tweak, at every town they arrived at, was nervously anxious to begin their exhibition; but Prodgers said that they were not yet far enough away from the metropolis to unfold their wonders to the public. They stopped at Kingston to lunch, where they also took up the fantoccini men and their company of flexible

puppets; and then crossing the Thames and passing Hampton Court, finally arrived at the first of those pleasant fishing-villages which border the Thames beyond this place, at one of which Mr. Prodgers determined to make his first appearance upon any show, in the character of its master.



## CHAPTER X.

THE RESULT OF MR. PRODGER'S ITINERANT SPECULATION.

IT was a fine, bright afternoon when the Caravan of Wonders halted, for the exhibition of its marvellous appurtenances. The facetious lessee of the concern for the time being, had selected the centre of a rural village, — a quiet, secluded, sleepy-looking place, with fine old trees rising up amongst the houses here and there, in their leafy mantles of waving foliage, and usually overtopping the humble cottages they sheltered; except in front of the alehouse, where the huge lime that stood at the door looked as if it had grown against an imaginary ceiling, and not being able to shoot upwards, had spread out in proportion, for the express purpose of forming a summer lounging-place for thirsty travellers.

It was also very hot. The most argumentative individual would not have contradicted the fact. So thought the waggoner, who was asleep beneath the tilt of his waggon, whilst his horses dreamily mumbled some warm hay from a rack, or coquetted with the tepid water in the trough:

so thought the host, who was smoking a pipe in his shirt-sleeves, exactly in the centre of the entrance to his inn, as much as to say it was of no use disturbing him by going in, for he was too hot to attend to anybody ; so thought the cows, as they stood knee-deep in water, vainly endeavouring to chastise impertinent flies with their tails. And so, doubtless, thought Mr. Prodgers and his fellow-student, who were sitting on the shelving turf at the side of the river, pelting small pebbles at a water-lily that trembled in the sunlight on the surface of the stream, whose rippling harmonised well with the crackling of the seed-pods of the wild plants upon the bank, and produced the only sounds that broke the afternoon stillness ; except the occasional wincing of the two horses, besieged by insects, who were cropping the grass at the side of the show, and now and then rattled their patchwork harness in so restless a manner as to call forth a passing reproof from their owner.

The mystic Crindle was still overlooking his apparatus, whilst the talented Siffleur had lighted an ancient pipe, and now reposed at full length beneath some trees, apparently taking a few gratuitous lessons in his art from the birds overhead. The Children of Caucasus, together with the Punch and Fantoccini, were ensconced in the taproom of the inn ; and Mr. Prodgers having come to the termination of a tankard of

home-brewed ale, in the discussion of which Mr. Tweak had ably assisted, now turned towards the house, and shouted for the attendant. The host, nothing disturbed, quietly telegraphed the boy from within, and he leisurely approached the customers.

“Now, young pot-hook,” said Mr. Prodgers; “stir yourself a little, and bring me a goblet of cool half-and-half.”

The boy, as soon as he clearly understood what a goblet meant, took the empty measure, and in a few instants returned with it; carrying it, however, very leisurely over the small patch of grass between the inn and the river.

“I hope this is good,” observed Mr. Tweak. “You ought always to put the ale in first, for fear the porter shouldn’t leave room for it—it’s very apt to behave so.”

As the boy retired, he was hailed by the driver of the caravan for some additional refection.

“Now, look sharp, you small go of humanity,” said that individual, who was known to his very particular acquaintances as Joe Bantam. “You seems too tender to move.”

“It’s so precious hot!” said the boy, with a sigh, indulging in a performance with his mouth, analogous to blowing off nothing from the tip of his nose. “Suppose you had to be druv about such weather as this, how would you feel?”

“Well, I likes that, anyhow, my half-pint,”

returned the other. "What have my pardners got to do to-night, I should like to know?"

The boy expressed his inability to comply with Mr. Bantam's desire for information.

"Well, wait, and you'll find out; but don't complain of work. I comes from Sheffield; look at the boys there. They works, they does. Look at that teaboard you are carrying. Do you see it?"

As the article in question was about two feet square, it could not very well escape the boy's observation.

"Now, all them flying heffuts was painted by babbies in cradles: the hinfant-schools does it. Was you ever in a hinfant school?"

"Nobody never taught me nothink," answered the boy.

"I should think so," rejoined Mr. Bantam; "you looks like it. Now, the Sheffield children knows everything. Their very playthings is screw-taps and hand-vices; and they gives 'em rivetting-hammers, to keep 'em quiet, instead of lollipops. There — be off, and look after your customers, for our gentlemen is coming up."

And, indeed, as the afternoon was advancing, Mr. Prodgers contemplated commencing their performance; and now left the river side, for the purpose of collecting his troop. The Caucasians were summoned from the tap-room, wherein they had been completing their toilets, and obeyed his

orders. The leader of the party, and strongest man, who rejoiced in the Caspian name of Bill, was a fine study for a sample of his class. He was attired in an old great-coat, in which string, pins, and buttons, struggled to possess the greatest power of attachment; whilst, below the skirts, which long wear had vandyked and scalloped in its own peculiar fashion, there appeared a pair of legs, evidently destitute of trowsers, but encased in cotton tights coarsely pinked. But these legs were not like human legs in ordinary, which are usually endowed with one fixed method of action: on the contrary, all the joints appeared to be formed upon the principle of the ball and socket, rather than the hinge; and nobody would have been in the least degree astonished to have seen the feet turn round upon their axes, and go heels forward; or the whole limbs assume that position of indefinite action which a limp sawdust doll exhibits when made to stand upon its legs. One of his companions was similarly attired, although younger, and of slighter build: his head being covered with an old seal-skin cap, whilst a considerable aperture in the shoulder of his upper-garment betrayed a pair of red braces, covered with large tarnished spangles, to the eyes of curious beholders. The other was evidently the senior of the three, and of that pinched-up and spare appearance which almost tempted one

to believe that he had been compelled by intense poverty to dispose of his inside at a great sacrifice, without the power of ever redeeming it. Notwithstanding the heat of the day, he was enveloped in a dingy cloak, which he termed his "rockelo," of a faded puce colour, shot with dust; and this he kept wrapt around him, although his painted face bore evidence that he was to be considered the grotesque, or clown, of the party.

"Well, my man," asked Mr. Prodgers as he advanced, "how are things looking?"

"Up-ish," was the reply: "they are talking about us in the inn, and I think we shall do. It's a pity that old grey mare isn't safe to ride in a ring."

"Why so?"

"Because Tom could get up an act of horsemanship," replied the Caucasian, pointing to their youngest companion. "He has done the Courier of Petersburg, and the Drunken Hussar often, when he was with Samwell's lot."

"You'd do something a good deal more curious than them, if you was to get on that old mare, I reckon," observed Mr. Bantam.

And this indirect aspersion upon the trustworthy character of one of his stud, immediately settled the question.

At last the hour arrived when Mr. Prodgers

thought it time to open his caravan to the public ; and having directed the younger of the Caucasian children to hoist up the pictures, he set the directors of the Fantoccini outside, to attract the audience by a gratuitous exhibition ; and one of them also formed the orchestra. It is true the band was not extensive, being composed of a drum and pandean-pipes alone, but much effect was produced by the ingenuity of the performer, who played first one and then the other, and then both together, beating the drum very hard when his breath failed him for the pipes. So that altogether it might be considered rather effective than otherwise, and perfectly answered the object, of drawing a large assemblage of the villagers together.

The speech which Mr. Prodgers addressed to the spectators was modelled after the most celebrated specimens of travelling-show declamation ; —a school of oratory to which he had paid great attention ; and he was ably assisted by the grotesque, who drew down shouts of laughter by his interpolations, in which Mr. Tweak heartily joined ; albeit, he felt somewhat nervous, and not altogether without apprehension, lest any of the Board of Examiners at the College of Surgeons should pass that way by chance, and see how they were engaged.

“ We shall commence, ladies and gentlemen,”

said Mr. Prodgers, "with the wonderful feats of the Children of Caucasus, who will go through a variety of posturing, balancing, and ground and lofty tumbling; as well as trampolines and summersets."

"As well as trampling on the sunset," observed the merriman.

"And the celebrated dance which was never performed by the great dancers at her Majesty's Opera in London, on account of its being too difficult."

"That's a lie!" observed the clown of Caucasus, in a confidential manner to the crowd.

"What did you say, sir?" asked Mr. Prodgers, with a stern air of authority.

"I said they didn't like to try," replied the grotesque, with much simplicity.

"Beautiful, Prodgers!" exclaimed Mr. Tweak, in a demi-voice from the doorway. "One would think that you had taken lessons in circus-etiquette, for many years, of Widdecomb."

"After which," continued Mr. Prodgers, kicking back his leg, to imply that Mr. Tweak's compliment was appreciated, but that he was not to pay any more, "after which the celebrated Siffleur, who is upon terms of chatting familiarity with every singing-bird in the world, will delight his hearers. The whole to conclude with the mystic delusions of the unapproachable wizard of



every point in the compass. Admission, ladies and gentlemen, sixpence each ; servants and working-people threepence."

At the conclusion of this address the band struck up a lively air, and the company began to ascend the steps. Mr. Tweak experienced at times some little difficulty in drawing the line between the sixpenny classes and their inferiors, but at last this was happily arranged ; and then the entertainments commenced to an audience of nine-and-sixpence, who were highly delighted, although the height of the caravan did not admit of the lofty tumbling advertised, for which an apology was made by the manager. When the performance was over, a fresh batch came forward, and then another, and another, until, at the final close, Mr. Tweak announced to his friend the gratifying intelligence that there was upwards of five pounds in the treasury ; a sum which exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

As Mr. Prodgers was requested by the members of his troop to allow them to turn the interior of the caravan into a many-bedded room, without beds, for that night only, he bespoke the best chamber the inn afforded for himself and Mr. Tweak ; as well as an excellent supper of new-laid eggs, and home-cured bacon, in which dish ended the host's assurance that they could have anything they pleased to order. They were

received at the inn with the most marked deference, being regarded as persons of almost supernatural qualities; and attended to with the greatest alacrity by the boy, whose activity increased as the temperature of the day diminished. And, when they finally retired for the night, somewhat fatigued with their exertions, upon gazing from their bedroom window, which overlooked the green, a light was still burning in the interior of the caravan; and occasionally sounds of merriment burst from the interior, through the stillness of the country evening, which proved that their talented company, in the absence of anything to lie down upon, had determined upon making a night of it.

“Well, Tweaky,” exclaimed Mr. Prodgers to his companion, as he unpacked his toilet appointments from his night-cap, which he generally used as a carpet-bag on his excursions, “I think we have done pretty well to-day. It almost tempts me to give up the study of medicine, and take to conjuring. I don’t see much difference between the two.”

“Not much,” said Mr. Tweak, sleepily. “Good night.”

“Good night,” replied Mr. Prodgers, yawning. “I am very tired, and shall have no great wish to unbutton my eyelids, and get up to-morrow morning.”

And then all was still : whilst Nature unfolded her own mystic wonders to the quiet night, with no witnesses except the stars, who were winking at the silent workings of her laboratory, like the eyes of an old gentleman on the bottom row of the Royal Institution, when an experiment of unusual interest defies his conjectures.

## CHAPTER XI.

MRS. DE ROBINSON'S FETE CHAMPETRE.

BUT, if all was thus tranquil at the village, the scene was very different at Mrs. De Robinson's villa residence on the Thames. For there the preparations for the gaiety of the morrow kept everybody wide awake until an advanced hour; and, whilst the servants were occupied in their respective departments, Miss De Robinson was cutting out water-lilies in silver-paper, under the direction of Mrs. Waddleston, which were to be pinned upon bungs, and set floating upon the river, restrained from going down the stream to the next lock by small plummets of curled lead. Mr. De Robinson junior, had cleared out the summer-house, and having manufactured an hermit, had seated him therein, deeply engaged in studying the day-book of an insolvent grocer, which he procured from his father's office; and, this finished, he was arranging small hooks about the trees for the illuminated lamps, and putting the last touches to a grand pictorial representation of Hong-kong, with Mount Vesuvius in the back-

ground. This elaborate production had been built up by him, with the assistance of an under scene-painter, brought from town for the purpose, and was to be the *cheval de bataille* of the evening, forming the scene of the pyrotechnic exhibition. It was constructed, in imitation of more extensive views in the metropolis, upon the edge of the pond, in the field adjoining the lawn ; and, when finished, Mr. De Robinson junior, having lighted some bits of wax-candle, sat upon the grass, and looked at it, until he had well nigh fallen asleep, in a mingled state of fatigue and admiration.

As Mr. De Robinson's barometer, upon which he set great value, usually prognosticated the weather inversely, everybody retired to bed very joyously upon hearing that the glass was very low, feeling assured that such a condition foretold a lovely day on the morrow ; and when the morrow arrived, the bright sun confirmed their expectations ; nor was there a cloud in the sky that looked at all as if it meant mischief, to induce that unpleasant suspense which usually attends all out-of-door entertainment in England.

The guests had not been asked to assemble before three o'clock ; but, shortly after noon, Mr. Prodgers made his appearance with his talented company ; and having been introduced to the ladies of the house, proceeded, with young De Robinson, to assign each to his station, and

tell them what they were to do. To the wizard was appropriated a small marquee upon the lawn, where he was to conjure perpetually : the Punch and Fantoccini were placed at the end of an avenue ; the Siffleur, who had arrayed himself in an elegant national costume of green-baize trimmed with shoe-strings, was to walk about amongst the guests ; and the Children of Caucasus, when called upon, were to exhibit on a small plot of grass in front of a light waggon, which, decorated with boughs, formed the orchestra. And, lastly, Mr. De Robinson led Messrs. Prodgers and Tweak towards his view of Hong-kong, and explained its mechanism, in which he should take the liberty of requesting them to assist him at night.

All these preliminaries were scarcely settled, when the visitors began to arrive. Many of them came down by water, and were received with salutes from a small battery of brass-cannon placed upon the lawn, which one of the Leanders of Mr. De Robinson's acquaintance had borrowed from a fast man, who kept a yacht ; and these were responded to with cheers from the little boys in the road, who clung to the palings like bees, peeping over into the garden, and lost in admiration at the, to them, mystic preparations. The company was received by Mrs. De Robinson and her daughter in an arbour of the choicest exotics, hired from the adjacent nursery ; and then the

old ladies were handed over to the care of Mrs. Waddleston, who entertained them with anecdotes of great people, whilst the young ones promenaded about the grounds, and exclaimed, "Oh! how exceedingly pretty!" to everything they saw. The refreshments were supplied from the window of the dining-room, which made a species of bar on a genteel scale; and after a little time the visitors dispersed about in groups of six or seven, beneath the trees, looking like the garden of Boccaccio seen through a multiplying glass, and forming such *tableaux* as Watteau would most probably have painted, had he lived now instead of when he did.

Amongst these latter was Emma Ledbury, looking so radiant and pretty, that there was only one opinion as to her being the *belle* of the assemblage. Indeed, a very elegant gentleman, who had driven down from town in his cab, and took care to let everybody know it, was so struck with her, that he scarcely knew where to find compliments enough to express his admiration; until a few of Emma's sensible replies, purposely given in a very matter-of-fact and natural manner, disconcerted him to that degree that he quietly lounged away, and endeavoured to create a greater sensation in other quarters. And when he was gone, a great many young men requested an introduction to her, in the hope of establishing themselves in her favour. But Emma saw no-

body amongst them who, in her opinion, at all came up to Jack ; and so, she cut all their fine speeches so very short, that one by one they fell off from her train, putting her down as a very strange girl, and being perfectly unable to make out how Mr. Prodgers finally engrossed her conversation. For Mr. Prodgers was not a cavalier of the first water in the eyes of the elegant gentlemen, who wondered at the patronage he received ; but Emma knew that he had been Jack's friend during his abode with Mr. Rawkins, and this was quite enough to make her think more of him than anybody else there. And, in turn, he was so delighted at being thus noticed, that all the wonderful people under his care were quite forgotten, and allowed to get through their performances as well as they could.

The professionals, however, acquitted themselves very creditably, and some of the guests even contributed to the festivities of the day, especially Master Cripps, and his sisters, who performed a scene descriptive of Swiss life on the mountains, and were loudly applauded by the large circle of surrounding spectators. The Misses Cripps were seated at a grand piano (which was wheeled out into the garden for the purpose), in very large straw-hats, and first performed a duet expressive of a snow-storm, the idea being conveyed by keeping the low notes in a state of unceasing rumble ; after which, in the characters of mother





Illustration of a theatrical performance in a park, showing a young boy in a sailor suit performing a dance or acrobatic feat, surrounded by a crowd of people in 19th-century attire.



and daughter, they expressed their fears that some merry Swiss boy, named Edwin, in whose interest they felt a welfare, would get snowed up on the mountains; the anxiety of the mother being much increased by her consciousness that he was from home, and her ignorance of where he lingered. But, presently, to their surprise and gratification, the notes of a flageolet were heard from behind the contiguous arbour, and the young ladies both exclaimed, "Hark! hark! what sounds are those I hear?" as if the flageolet had been an unknown instrument, and perfectly beyond their most acute conjectures, as to its acoustic organization.

But the mystery was soon solved by the appearance of Master Cripps, who danced a lively measure to the symphony of the piano, and shot out from behind the arbour, amidst the *bravos!* of the by-standers. Master Cripps was attired in a pair of cotton-drawers, tied with blue ribands at the knees, as also were his shirt-sleeves above and below the elbows; after the most approved style of peasants dwelling in Helvetia's mountain-bowers, and young rustics in tolerably comfortable circumstances, like Lothair and Elvino. Besides this, Master Cripps had on glazed pumps, and had also put his feet through a pair of mittens, which he had pulled round the calves of his legs, the whole costume being strikingly characteristic of humble Swiss life, and peculiarly

adapted for leaving the wearer perfectly at his ease in the midst of glaciers and snow-drifts, and allowing that free play of the limbs which the chase of the chamois calls forth. Mrs. Waddleston was delighted, and took occasion to inform those within hearing that she had accompanied the Marquis of Heydown through Switzerland, and a great way beyond it, during his late tour (which had created so great a sensation in the upper circles that now no traveller's trunk was without it, firmly pasted to the interior), and consequently could bear witness to the vividness of the personation. And she also regretted that the Marquis was not present; for, the De Robinson villa being on the waterside, he would possibly have condescended to have shown the company how to set the Thames on fire, which he had more than once hinted at his power of being able to accomplish in that great work. Emma Ledbury, who was standing very near to her, leaning on the arm of Mr. Prodggers, heard this; but little knew that Jack and Titus were in his lordship's company at that very time, many hundred miles away.

Master Cripps soon relieved the anxiety of his fond relatives, by telling them that he had merely been detained by some indefinite fair—a merry-making, not a female,—and had brought them home a present therefrom. This was very elegant, being a rosette with streamers, formed by

tricolour ribands of that breadth known in commerce as "fourpenny"; and, if his relatives kept a carriage, very serviceable to put on the left ear of the near horse, and produce the one-sided deception practised in a similar manner, with respect to the black velvet trappings of funerals. The joy of the two ladies was very great to see Master Cripps return; and then they all three joined in a glee, expressive of love, affection, and contentment, which concluded with great effect, amidst the thanks of the audience generally.

And so things went on, everybody imagining that they were enjoying themselves, as is common upon such occasions. The conjuror performed *à merveille*; the Caucasians threw their legs over their shoulders, hopped like frogs, and stood upon one another's heads; and the other wonders exerted themselves with the same success, under the superintendence of Mr. Tweak, who, having passed his apprenticeship in a remote county Union, felt more at his ease amongst the *saltimbanques* than in the fashionable world. Some of the company looked on, others flirted, more went on the water, and the rest danced, until evening arrived, and Mr. De Robinson prepared for his pyrotechnic exhibition of Hong-kong, and the ascent of a fire-balloon. And, whilst the company partook of tea and syllabub, he proceeded with Mr. Prodgers and his com-

panion to make the necessary arrangements for the display.

The scene was arranged, as we have described, upon the edge of a pond, in a paddock adjoining the lawn, and separated therefrom by an invisible fence. An additional effect was produced by the model of a junk, borrowed from the museum of the Clumpley Literary Institution, which floated in front : and there was also a whale, who was to spout real water from his blowholes by means of mystic arrangement of subaqueous india-rubber tubes, in which the garden-engine was to be principally concerned. At the edge of the pond was a shed filled with straw, not very Chinese or picturesque in its appearance, but as it could not be moved, Mr. De Robinson had painted it with gay colours, and stuck a transparent lantern on the roof, politely furnished from the windows of the waggish tradesman who had christened his establishment, "The Clumpley T Mart." When all was ready, and it was sufficiently dark, Mr. De Robinson rang the dinner-bell to summons the company ; and, after a little delay, caused by moving the rout-seats from the house to the lawn, they were all arranged in order. Mrs. Waddleston took the centre place in the front row, that she might say out loud whether or no it was a resemblance of Vesuvius ; and discover if Hong-kong appeared a pleasant place, as she had some thoughts of going there by herself next autumn.

As soon as the guests had admired the effect of the illumination-lamps, which had been lighted up in their absence, and now sparkled amongst the trees like the jewelled fruit in the fairy gardens of Aladdin, the exhibition commenced by the band playing the overture to "The Bronze Horse." Then artfully constructed fireworks and coloured lights went off in all directions, revealing all the pretty faces of the young ladies, rendered doubly attractive and coquettish by the lace-bordered handkerchiefs they had tied, gipsy-fashion, over their heads. Mr. Prodgers, in his anxiety to light the fire-works, sometimes appeared high above the mountains of the background, like another Polyphemus, or Spectre of the Broken, until he died away in the darkness consequent upon the final bangs of the cases; after which the fall of the rocket-sticks upon the heads of the company diverted their attention. The whale was a great "hit," as well as the outburst of Vesuvius, which Mr. Tweak medically defined as an eruption, preceded by great subcutaneous inflammation of maroons and crackers. Then small cannon were discharged from the junk, and answered from the batteries; and finally a fire-balloon was announced as about to ascend.

After the time necessary for its inflation with rarefied air, the Montgolfier slowly rose. But,

as chance would have it, at this precise moment a breeze sprung up from the river, and, slightly tipping the balloon on one side, caused it to catch fire. The flame spread rapidly, and it fell blazing almost immediately upon the thatched top of the straw-shed, which, perfectly dry from the heat of the weather, instantly ignited. The audience, who imagined the taking of Hong-kong was to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of the spectacle, and conceived this a portion of it, applauded most vigorously, and cries of "Capital!" "Excellently managed!" "Bravo!" burst from all quarters.

They were soon undeceived. In a terrible alarm at this unrehearsed effect of his aëronautical undertaking, Mr. De Robinson junior, tore the garden-engine away from its communication with the whale, and, hurriedly giving the hose to Mr. Prodgers, told him to direct it at the flames, whilst he pumped with all his might, in an agony lest the fire should communicate with the rest of the building. But Mr. Prodgers, a little bewildered at the instant, was somewhat uncertain in his aim; and the consequence was, that the next moment a deluge of water flew wildly in the faces of the audience, the smoke completely obscuring their position, drenching them to the skin, and paralyzing the greater part of them with terror. Mr. De Robinson, who conceived their cries of alarm to arise from the fall of the burning embers amongst them, worked the engine harder than



ever, until Mrs. Waddleston, who was exposed to all its force, was as completely soaked as if she had tumbled into the river itself; whilst the whole company made a mad retreat, tumbling over the seats, shrieking and fainting in every direction.

As might be conceived, this untimely *contre-temps* very soon brought the festivities to a close. In vain did Mrs. De Robinson, as soon as she regained her reason, offer shawls and cloaks,—the ladies were all anxious to get home as soon as they could; in vain did Mr. De Robinson junior, pump, and Mr. Prodgers guide the engine in all directions,—the entire shed was burned down, in spite of all their exertions. And, to complete the panic, the parish-engine, which had been undisturbed for years, came rattling up within five minutes, surrounded by an hundred boys from the village, and forcibly took possession of the grounds, with all its attendants, amidst the confusion of the different carriages, whipping, jamming, and driving in for their occupiers.

This was too much. The guests hurried off in the greatest dismay, seizing upon strange flies, and, forcibly appropriating other people's vehicles to themselves, in their excitement. And, when all had departed, the lady De Robinsons went into hysterics; Mrs. Waddleston declared her intention of leaving the next morning, never to return, feeling assured that the insult was in-

tended by her nephew, because she had set her face against the engagement of ballet-girls ; and Mr. De Robinson junior, got rid of Mr. Prodgers and his company as soon as he could, and in the politest possible manner, promising to call upon him in town, and settle everything connected with the festival, which had terminated so inauspiciously.

## CHAPTER XII.

LEDBURY AND JACK CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY UP THE  
RHINE.—THE LEGEND OF LURLEY.

ACCORDING to the-determination of the previous evening, when Mr. Ledbury had so suddenly raised the siege of Ehrenbreitstein, at half-past six the next morning he was once more on board the steam-boat, and, with his friend, again pursuing their course along the turbid waters of the Rhine. Titus felt rather nervous as he reflected on his precipitate retreat from the fortress; and it was not until a turn in the river shut out the "broad stone of honour" from his view that he entirely recovered his self-possession.

Several of their companions in the journey of the preceding day were on board, including the pensive gentleman, and the majority of the English tourists, who had stopped one night at Coblenz, firstly, to say they had been there; and secondly, to give an account of its principal curiosities, its manners, customs, and institutions, when they wrote a book on their return home, for which purpose they were all engaged in taking notes. Jack and Ledbury occupied their old po-

sitions on the tubs at the head of the boat, and were soon engaged in chat with those around them, concerning the different localities upon the banks. As they arrived off Boppart, and the vessel stopped for a few minutes to take in passengers, a gentleman of high bearing and imposing *tournure* came marching down the platform with his lady, who was in an elegant costume of feathers and satin, adapted for the middle horticultural fête at Chiswick, and therefore perfectly in keeping with the scenery of the Rhine. He was followed by the attendant from one of the hotels, with whom he seemed to be engaged in high argument respecting a question of remuneration.

“Nein, nein, Kellner,” exclaimed the gentleman; “nothing, — I have nothing for you. Want of attention, high charges, and plebeian accommodation.”

As the speaker stood on the deck of the boat, the waiter let fall a few words of masked impertinence, and turned upon his heel.

“Ah, ah!” continued the gentleman, apparently addressing himself to everybody, “you may reply, waiter; but look at the *Livre des Voyageurs*. One of my party has recorded the entertainment as detestable, and our names are affixed thereto.”

“How lucky we are,” said Jack to Ledbury, “to see Boppart to-day.”

“Why so, Jack?”

“Why, of course the hotel will shut up after that terrible blow, and that will ruin the town. Boppart is doomed.”

And so evidently thought the gentleman, from the look of vengeance that he threw towards it. As his carriage was on board, he hastily assisted the lady into it, as if it had been a camphorated asylum from the contagion of the vulgar; and then, apparently satisfied that there were no very disreputable people within some distance, he strode to the fore part of the boat, and took his place close to our tourists. But, as his arrival did not appear to create any great sensation amongst the party, he drew a gilt-edged morocco note-book from his pocket, and under pretence of inserting a memorandum therein, held it in such a direction that the others could read the name embossed upon the cover, and be perfectly aware that it was no other than the Marquis of Heydown who now honoured them by joining their circle.

“I say, Jack,” whispered Ledbury, “do you see that? He’s a marquis!”

“Very well,” replied Johnson, “I know it. Let’s ask him how he feels upon the whole this morning.”

“Hush!—don’t be silly,” said Titus. “Perhaps he will not like it.”

“Pray, sir,” interposed the pensive gentleman, speaking to Johnson, and coming to the relief of Titus, whose ideas of addressing a marquis were

somewhat vague, "pray, sir, what are those ruins high up on our left?"

"Liebenstein and Sternfels," answered Jack. "They are called The Brothers."

"Beautiful relics of an age gone by!" ejaculated the pensive gentleman, apostrophising the ruins. "Were ye endowed with tongues, what a number of thrilling stories could ye relate!"

"Except it were a one-storied building," said Jack.

But the pensive gentleman, apparently not comprehending him, kept gazing with rapt admiration at the ruins as he murmured,

"The tenants of those bleak battlements have passed away, and an unhonoured grave is all their former lords have gained."

"I think he has drunk a little too much Moselle at breakfast," whispered Ledbury.

"Not at all," said Jack; "he has been taken poorly in the same way two or three times since we have travelled with him."

"Then he must be slightly mad," continued Titus.

"Not exactly mad," returned Johnson; "but I think he's a poet. I'll draw him out, and then drop him." And with this resolve Jack spouted forth, as he looked towards the Brothers,

"And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,  
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd."

The pensive gentleman turned round, and looked at Jack as if he could not believe such feeling existed in the mind of one whose story of the Drakenfels had so rudely disturbed his romance. But Jack was gazing so earnestly at the ruins, with such an expression of enthusiasm in his features, that the pensive gentleman felt assured, after all, he was a kindred spirit, and replied,

“ You are right, sir. How has the present degenerated from the emblazoned glories of the past ! ”

“ It has indeed ! ” exclaimed Johnson. “ Think of the golden epochs of the Rhine, when no base spirit could call his life or goods his own, but those great minds, who ruled these castle keeps, rushed like a torrent down upon the vale, sweeping the flocks and herds ! ”

“ Ah ! those were thrilling times ! ” said the pensive gentleman, “ days of giant enterprise. The prowess of those mighty spirits swept away not only the cattle, as you have so well observed, but even the dwellings of their opponents.”

“ Dwellings, sir ! ” continued Jack, with dramatic energy. “ They even swept the chimneys. The whole race for power was one great sweep, where either party tried to save the stake that awaited him if he lost.”

“ They were perpetually fighting with each

other," observed the pensive gentleman. "They led a life of unceasing skirmish."

"It was through these constant brushes that so many things were swept away," replied Jack, no longer able to command his features, but laughing in the middle of his sentence.

"I was not in a humour for absurd ridicule, sir," said the pensive gentleman, with some warmth, as he perceived Jack's ill-suppressed merriment; and, darting daggers at Johnson, he started up from his seat, and sought the other end of the boat.

The marquis, who had been all this time looking very exclusive, now appeared to unbend a little, and, of his own accord, observed to Johnson,

"I am considerably disappointed in the Rhine."

"Everybody is, sir," returned Johnson, "that ever I met with, only they do not like to say so, for fear of being shouted at. It's a mere popular delusion, which the guide-books, hotels, and steamers have an interest in keeping up."

"They will not do so long," replied the marquis. "I have a book coming out which will set everything to rights. Perhaps you do not know whom you are conversing with?"

"I have not that pleasure," answered Jack, purposely concealing his knowledge of the other's rank.



“I am the Marquis of Heydown,” said the nobleman.

Upon which Jack made a polite bow, and Ledbury tried to do the same ; but he had tied his cap under his chin with a piece of string, to keep it from being blown away, and could not get it off his head.

“I am writing a book,” continued the marquis, most patronizingly communicative, “a book which I think has been long wanted. Not a common itinerary, but a view of that exclusive society which travellers of my rank can alone obtain.”

“I think such a work would attract notice, my lord,” returned Jack, “and be very diverting to persons like ourselves.”

“Unquestionably,” replied the noble author. “My position and influence with our embassies will procure me admission everywhere.”

“Wherever it was practicable, of course, my lord,” said Jack.

“Of course,” echoed the marquis, somewhat indignantly ; “and where it was not, if I were refused, I would publish my correspondence with them on the subject. A proper exposure would then make it a matter of government, and call down popular indignation. Poof ! what insufferable smells pollute these steam-boats !”

And, disgusted at a slight odour of hot oil which came up for a moment from the engine-

room, the noble tourist sought refuge in his carriage, and appeared no more.

The steamer vibrated onwards, but now made slower way ; for they were approaching the most romantic portion of the river, where the stream flows with increased force and rapidity between the almost perpendicular boundaries of rugged black granite, which are crowned by the ruins of Rheinfels and Katz. The mind of the pensive gentleman was evidently bursting with emotion ; but, as he could not very well make out the localities, and knew nothing of the traditions, he found it best, for his own convenience, to keep close to Johnson after all. And so he once more sidled up to the end of the boat, and gradually entered into conversation again.

“And what are those ruined keeps, sir ?” he asked, pointed to a dilapidated tower.

“They are the ruins of the Katz,” replied Jack. “You know the story connected with them ?”

The pensive gentleman had never heard it.

“Well, then,” continued the irreclaimable Jack, “after Bishop Hatton had baited his own trap with himself, and been eaten up by the rats in the *Maus-thurm*, which we shall see by and by, the Burgraves built this castle to guard against such another shocking instance of animal voracity.”

“In what manner, sir?” asked the traveller.

“By storing it with hundreds of cats,” replied Jack, “from which it derived its name. But in a time of famine, when provisions ran short, they devoured their keepers; and then the place went to decay, as you see.”

Mr. Ledbury here attempted a tepid joke, something about “catastrophe;” but, upon a look from Jack of wild astonishment, he felt that the age of the jest was no protection against its enormity, and shrunk back in great confusion as the word died away upon his lips.

“I did not expect this from you, Leddy,” said Jack, more in sorrow than censure, “or that you were in such an abject state of jocular destitution. You have only now to call snuffing a candle ‘throwing a little light upon the subject,’ and then you will have arrived at the last pitch of facetious degradation.”

Titus made no reply; but his lip quivered as he acknowledged the justness of his friend’s reproaches.

A sharp turn of the Rhine, which now swept rapidly round the base of an enormous rock, brought our travellers to the celebrated Lurleyberg. A gun was here fired to call out the echoes from their rocky homes, and the report having reverberated four or five times, gradually diminished, until it sounded like distant thunder.

“What a beautiful echo!” exclaimed Ledbury, glad of diversion. “How is it produced, Jack?”

“Why, here you have it,” replied Johnson, drawing a rough sketch upon the top of the tub with a piece of chalk, as well as several lines running from 1 to 2, and from A to B. “There—that’s the whirlpool, and those are the photographic — no — philanthropic — phonocamptic, that’s it—phonocamptic centres. Don’t you understand?”

“Oh yes,—perfectly,” said the pensive gentleman.

“I’m glad of it,” replied Jack, “because it’s more than I do; but I dare say it’s all right. The guide-books have it, so it must be.”

“What is the tradition of the Lurleyberg?” asked Ledbury.

“I’ll tell you,” replied Jack.

And taking his old MS. note-book from his pocket, he commenced.

#### THE LEGEND OF LURLEY.

“Every traveller hashes up the tradition of the Lurleyberg in a way that he supposes will be most palatable to his readers.”—*A Family Tour, &c.*

THE bell for the Compline, with echoing roar,  
Had call’d to their mass the young monks of St. Goar,  
And their banquet they left, and its bacchanal strains,  
With a little too much Rhenish wine in their brains;

For in ages of yore,  
The young monks of St. Goar  
Were wilder than any monks since or before ;  
You 'd have thought that each merry-eyed shaven young  
spark  
Had come up the Rhine from the Convent of Lark.

At last it was over, the prayers were said,  
And the monks swarm'd giddily off to bed,  
Like a cluster of tipsy bees.  
Within 'twas all snug: but the north wind without  
Was indulging itself in a terrible rout,  
As chimneys and gables it blew in and out,  
And rattled the vanes and the casements about ;  
Now mimicking laughter, shriek, whistle, and shout,  
Sometimes whirling off a loose pantile or spout  
To the cloisters below, with a deuce of a clout,  
Or stripping a branch from the trees.

At length in the corridors old was no step heard,  
But all was as still as the night when Jack Sheppard,  
With footstep as stealthy as panther or leopard,  
Escaped from his dread doom  
By leaving the "red room,"  
Exclaiming, as if all upbraiding to smother,  
"Each brick I take out brings me nearer my mother!"  
(If you ask for the last rhyme to whom I'm in debt,  
I confess that it comes from the song of "We met,"  
In which some young lady, much given to languish,  
Abuses her mother for causing her anguish.)

But young Father Winkle *he* went not to sleep,  
For he had that night an appointment to keep,  
So stealthily down the back stairs he did creep,  
And crossing the cloister, whilst sounded the hour,  
He reach'd the old gate of the almoner's tower,  
Where, coaxing the lock with a huge gothic key,  
He let in the guest he expected to see.

It was not a penitent come to confess,  
 Nor a foot-weary pilgrim in want or distress,  
 But—*O pudor ! O mores !*—a beautiful girl !  
 Who enter'd the room with a bound and a twirl,  
 Which the “omnibus” heads would have set in a whirl,  
 Though pretty Cerito most jealous might feel,  
 With Planquet, and Scheffer, and little Camille,  
 In a very short dress of the loveliest green,  
 More fine and transparent than ever was seen,  
*Bouffée'd by a jupe of the best crinoline.*

By what chance *she*

First came to be

Within St. Goar's proud monast'ry,

We know not well ;

But the chronicles tell

*Qu'elle avoit une gorge extrêmement belle.*

Young Father Winkle fondly gazed upon this lovely form,  
 Through whose fair skin the vivid blood was blushing young and  
 warm,

And felt how beauty's presence proved a “comfort in a storm.”  
 He look'd upon her flowing hair, so glossy, dark, and long,  
 Her eyes so bright, whose magic might cannot be told in song,  
 And then his conscience whisper'd he was doing very wrong,  
 Although he thought in such a case the fault might be excused ;  
 For when, by some fair creature's guiles, poor mortals are amused,  
 Their just ideas of right and wrong are terribly confused.

However firm our self-command, all resolution trips  
 Beneath the mesmerizing thrill of woman's ruby lips.

But 'tis an adage known full well,

That folks should never kiss and tell,

Or else we might have shown

That the first meeting of the two,

And greeting eke which did ensue,

Was not of words alone.

“Now come with me,” the fair one cried,

“In these dull cells no longer bide.

I will become thy river bride,  
And o'er my realms thou shalt preside—  
    Away—the dawn is near ;  
The wind is hush'd—the storm has pass'd—  
The sky no longer is o'ercast ;  
And see, the moon begins to shine  
Upon the mountains of the Rhine  
    In radiance bright and clear.  
Then come with me, and we will go  
Where the rocks of coral grow.”—  
(I 've heard those lines before, I know.)

    Father Winkle cried, “ Stay,  
    I 've a trifle to say  
Ere thus from my duties you draw me astray.  
My beautiful Lurley, one instant delay—  
Each wish that you utter I burn to obey ;  
But, in truth, love, I don't very well see my way.  
For though many people I 've met heretofore  
Find keeping their heads above water a bore,  
Yet keeping mine under would puzzle me more.  
With your own pretty self, as my sentiments prove,  
I 'm over my head and my ears now in love,  
And I cannot well see what we gain by the move.”

    Replied Lurline, “ My dear,  
    You have nothing to fear ;  
You would sleep just as well in the Rhine's bed as here.”—

    Said Winkle, said he,  
    “ That bed won't do for me ;  
For its bedding would nothing but winding-sheets be,  
And I can't bear wet blankets in any degree.  
In accepting your offer, to me it seems clear,  
That I only should get in so novel a sphere,  
Not my bed and my board, but my bed and my bier.”  
“ My Winkle,” said Lurline, repressing a frown,  
“ The bed of the Rhine is of costliest down.”—  
“ Yes, down at the bottom, my own one, I know ;  
But I 'm downy, too ; no—I don't think I 'll go.”

Then Lurline look'd mournfully up in his eye,  
 With a face at once impudent, tearful and sly,  
 And a sweet *petite mine*, as if going to cry,  
 As she said, "Can it be? would you leave me to die?  
 Farewell cruel Winkle; from hence I shall fly.  
 Think of Lurline—sometimes—I am going—good-b'ye!"  
 Thus speaking, the nymph waved her hand in adieu,  
 And e'er he could answer, dissolved like a view.

But fair Lurline knew

What was sure to accrue,

When from Winkle's fond eyes she so quickly withdrew!  
 And she said to herself, as she slipp'd through the wall,  
 "I was never yet foil'd,—you'll be mine after all!"

There 's a boat

That 's afloat

On the edge of the Rhine:

With a sail

When a gale

Should blow on the right line;

And Winkle had heard of a jolly young waterman,

Who at St. Goarshausen used for to ply.

So he stayed not a second; you would not have thought a  
 man

Not over lean could so rapidly fly.

And down to the river he ran like a shot;

But when he arrived there, the boatman was not:

For, during the night-time all traffic was dull,

And the waterman taking his rest in the lull,

With an eider-down pillow had feathered his skull.

But there lay the barks, sail, rudder, and oar,

All properly stamp'd with the cross of St. Goar,

As ordered to be by the Burgraves of yore;

For the Burgraves of yore were a powerful *clique*:

If they wish'd a thing done, they had only to speak,

And none dared to show, at their visits, his pique;



Although Victor Hugo, they tell us, was grieved.  
To find that *his* Burgraves were coldly received.

But, though there was no waterman the fragile boat to guide,  
The fever'd monk pushed off from shore, and launch'd it in the tide.  
The wind was right, the bark was light, the father's arm was  
strong,

And, darting through the foaming waves, they swiftly flew along.  
High on the right the Rheinfels' Keep slept in the moon's cold  
gleam,

Whilst opposite the lofty Katz was frowning on the stream ;  
And round the huge basaltic rocks, one on the other piled,  
The roaring waters leapt and chafed, in whirlpools swift and wild,  
Until, beneath the Lurleyberg, half-hidden by the foam,  
The monk and boat at last drew near fair Lurline's echoing home,  
Where every grim basaltic cliff sings to the lashing spray,  
The only rock harmonicon that's heard both night and day ;

And fast unto a mighty stone  
The monk his vessel made.  
At other time in spot so lone  
He had been sore afraid ;  
But, ere he 'd any time to think,  
Or from his venture wild to shrink,  
Uprising from the whirlpool's brink,  
Lurline her form betrayed,  
And with a voice of magic tone  
Thus sang she, to an air well known :

" I 'm the fairest of Rhine's fairy daughters,      *Lurley-ety !*  
Though I ought not to say so myself ;  
Each peri that dwells 'neath its waters—      *Lurley-ety !*  
I rule ; and my slave is each elf.  
Then come, love ; oh come love, with me,  
I thy own peri, Winkle, will be.  
Haste, haste to my home, I implore,      *Lurley-ety*  
And give up the cells of St. Goar.

*Lurley-ety! lurley-ety!*—now make up your mind,  
*Lurley-ety! lurley-ety!*—or else stay behind.

Lurley-ety-y-y-y-y!"

---

The song had concluded, and hush'd was the strain,  
 Except what the echoes sang over again,  
 As the notes died away  
 In the noise of the spray,  
 When Winkle, o'ercome, shouted, "Lurline!—oh! stay!  
 Believe me, yours truly—yours only—for aye!"

He said; and plunged in  
 Midst the clash and the din  
 Of the eddies ne'er ceasing to bubble and spin,  
 And the rock of the Lurleyberg tried to make fast to,  
 Like the mates of Æneas *in gurgite vasto*;  
 But soon through the tide  
 Came Lurline to his side,  
 And into the vortex her lover did guide.  
 One shriek of despair  
 From the monk rent the air  
 As he whirl'd round and round, like a thing at a fair,  
 Whilst, Lurline, enraptured a priest to ensnare,  
 Plunged after her victim to meet him elsewhere.  
 The waters closed over his head with a roar,  
 And the young father Winkle was heard of no more—  
 At least that I know of. My legend is o'er.

#### MORAL.

Mistrust all short dresses, and *jupes crinolines*,  
 Whether sported by Alma, Giselle, or Ondine;  
 Once caught by some bright-eyed Terpsichore's daughter,  
 You won't very long keep *your head above water*!

"Well, what will you take after that, Jack, to wash it down?" said Ledbury. "I think you

need something—does he not, sir?" he continued, addressing their companion.

"It is a mere imitation," observed the pensive gentleman, with a slight sneer.

"It was meant for nothing else," retorted Jack.

"I have read *Lalla Rookh*," said the pensive gentleman. "Fadladeen disarms all future criticism by his remarks upon the progress of the poem. I would recommend you to do so too." And he evidently thought he had said something very severe.

"And very proper of him too," replied Jack. "I have the pleasure of drinking to you, sir."

And in a similar manner did the remainder of the day pass on board the *Königinn*, until about four o'clock in the afternoon, when they once more landed upon the packet-quay of Mayence; and, crossing the Rhine by the bridge of boats, proceeded on the same evening to Frankfort by the railway, where the *Gasthaus zum Weissen Schwan* received them within its hospitable portals.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ZURICH.—THE NIGHT ON THE RIGI.—THE MISTAKE.

THE progress of our two friends was not particularly interesting, or checkered by any adventure beyond the ordinary *désagrémens* of travelling, for a few days. They left Frankfort the next evening by the mail, and, passing through Darmstadt, Heidelberg, and Stuttgart, arrived very early on the third morning at Schaffhausen. Here they shouldered their knapsacks, and, visiting the falls of the Rhine on their way, made a very creditable day's march of thirty miles to Zurich, where they were not sorry once more to enjoy the comfort of a regular night's rest, before making the ascent of the Rigi, which was to be their next excursion on the ensuing day.

"Now everything will depend to-morrow upon fine weather," said Jack, as they retired to rest. "It looks tolerably clear at present; but you can never calculate upon the skies in these mountainous districts. Let us hope for the best."

As they were really very tired with their journey, they were both soon asleep. But in the

middle of the night Mr. Ledbury awoke, and, having listened attentively for a minute or two, called out to his friend,

“I say, Jack,—here ’s a nuisance. It ’s pouring with rain as fast as it possibly can.”

There was certainly not much mistake about it; it was coming down in a regular deluge.

“Well, it cannot be helped, Leddy,” replied Jack. “Perhaps it will hold up by the morning. Go to sleep again.”

But the chance of an end being put to their Rigi excursion so vexed Mr. Ledbury, that he lay in great distress for half an hour, during which time the pouring never ceased, or abated its violence. At last he gradually dozed off again; but his annoyance haunted him in his sleep, rendering it broken and unrefreshing; in fact, whilst dreaming that it was a lovely day, he awoke again, as the bell from the adjacent *wasserkirche* chimed the hour of three. To his great dismay, the rain was coming down as fast as ever! This time he did not disturb Jack; but, giving up all thoughts of their journey, he turned moodily round, and was once more lost in his slumbers.

It was a quarter to six when they once more awoke, and traffic appeared to be going on with great activity in the streets below, but still the pouring deluge continued. Jack jumped out of bed, and pushed aside the blind, to see if there was any chance of the sky clearing, when, to their

surprise, a bright, glorious sunbeam darted into the room, and the blue lake, glittering in the morning rays, was covered with boats and passengers, everything looking as lovely, clear, and summer-like as could well be.

“Why, what a deal of unnecessary torment you have given yourself,” said Johnson to his friend. “Here’s a brilliant morning !”

“How remarkably strange !” observed Titus, sitting up in bed, and rubbing his eyes, to assure himself that he was not still dreaming.

“Not at all,” replied Jack ; “get out, and judge for yourself.”

And then the enigma was solved. Immediately below their window, in a kind of square, was a large fountain, the water from which dashed over one or two pieces of stone-work, before it fell into the basin ; and it was this noise which, in the silence of the night, Mr. Ledbury had, very pardonably, mistaken for rain. However, the agreeable surprise made up for all their anxiety ; and, dressing with alacrity, they were soon down at the edge of the lake, where a small steamer was waiting to take them across to Horgen, with several travellers on board, as usual, principally English, and all bound upon the same excursion.

A very light vapour was rising along some portion of the shore ; but, as this misty curtain was lifted up, the lake came out in all its loveliness ;

and the different chalets, farms, orchards, and mountains surrounding it, dotted with white towers and villagers, formed a scene of which description will convey no proper idea. For the first quarter of an hour everybody was engaged in looking at the beautiful panorama, and uttering exclamations of pleasure; and after that, they began to shut up their maps and guides, and look at one another.

The transit from Zurich to Horgen does not take up much time, and there was a jolly gentleman on board, whom Jack scraped acquaintance with, so lively and good-tempered, that he made the journey shorter still. He was dressed in a common blouse, check trowsers, and ankle-shoes, with something like a game-bag slung over his shoulders, and one of the Rigi poles, tipped by a chamois horn, in his hand. He appeared to know everybody on board perfectly well, although he had never seen any of them before, and was equally well acquainted with every object upon the shores of the lake.

"Going up the Rigi, sir, I suppose?" he said to Jack. "Walking, I presume?"

"We think of doing so," replied Johnson.

"The only way, sir," replied Mr. Crinks; for such they ascertained his name to be, from a "hand-book" which he lent them. "Your knapsacks are rather too heavy, though; it's a pull, you know."

“And yet we have as little as may well be.”

“Ah — too much, sir, too much. Look here,” he continued, slapping the bag at his side, “here’s my wardrobe. Two shirts, four socks, and a toothbrush. Find two shirts quite enough — one down and t’other come on.”

“But how do you manage about clean linen?” inquired Mr. Ledbury.

“Pooh! nothing — wash them myself. Put them on one flat stone, and knock them with another: pin them on my back to dry, and there you are.”

“Have you travelled far, sir?” asked Jack, much taken with the *bonhommie* of their new companion.

“No — not this time. I’ve only walked from Basle; but I’m going on to Constantinople, to see where Hero and Leander swarm across the Bosphorus.”

“The Hellespont, I think,” observed Titus.

“Ah! yes — so it was — one place will do just as well as another.”

“But are you really going to Constantinople?” asked Jack.

“Oh, further than that,” replied Mr. Crinks: “I shall get to Jericho, if I can.”

“I have heard it is a poor place,” said Johnson; “merely the huts of some miserable Arabs.”

“Never mind that,” said their light-hearted



companion. "I want to see what it's like; I have always had an idea that it must be such a comic place. Besides, when I'm told to go there, as people often are, I can say I've been, and that will put the drag on at once — ha! ha! ha! Here we are — all alive. This is Horgen: walk up, ladies and gentlemen."

And, as the steam-boat had arrived at the modest port of this little village, the passengers disembarked, with the exception of a few who were going on to Rapperschwyl.

A long vehicle, something between a van and an omnibus, was waiting to convey them to Zug and Art; and Mr. Crinks immediately took possession of the outside seats, followed by Jack and Mr. Ledbury, who placed their knapsacks to keep guard, as they intended to walk by the side of the carriage, when with additional horses it toiled up the precipitous road of the Albis.

"Nun, meine Herren: es ist Zeit um abzureisen langsam," cried the driver, as he climbed on to his perch.

"Yes," replied Mr. Crinks.

"What does he say, sir;" asked Ledbury.

"Goodness knows. I always answer 'yes.' I dare say it's all right."

The crowds of cocks and hens fluttering and cackling about the road, — the characteristics of all minor Swiss villages, — afforded great amusement to Mr. Crinks, who poked them about with

his staff, chevied them into corners, and under the omnibus, and whenever he succeeded in catching one, put its head under its wing, and whirling it round and round, made it what he called tipsy, laughing with great glee at its ludicrous attempts to maintain its equilibrium when set down again, in which the driver halted to join, deeming it a performance of excellent humour.

“ I say, old fellow, you are loitering in the Poultry,” said Mr. Crinks, laughing. “ You’d have the Lord Mayor after you in London — eh ? ”

“ Ich hatte nicht verstanden,” answered the coachman.

“ Oh, very well,” continued Mr. Crinks: “ just as you please. I’m not proud ; I’ll stand anything you like at the next ghost-house.”

The series of magnificent views which opened through the mist one after another, as they climbed the Albis, now stopped all conversation ; but when they had arrived at the top, and began to descend, Johnson, Titus, and their new acquaintance, climbed up to the seat, and took their places by the driver. And then they were all very merry, singing, laughing, and telling all sorts of droll stories, whilst the omnibus proceeded along the beautiful road between Zug and Art, with the clear, sparkling lake on the right, and a succession of precipices, vineyards, farms, and cascades, on the left, following each other

the whole distance ; and every now and then a turn of the road disclosed the blue summit of the Rigi, towering far above the mountains by which it was surrounded.

As their carriage stopped to put down its passengers in front of the little inn at Art, they were immediately besieged by a crowd of boys, proffering their services as guides to the Rigi, or carriers of their luggage, one of whom seized upon Mr. Ledbury's knapsack, and ran off with it as fast as he could,—not with the intention of stealing it, but to insure a customer for the excursion. But Titus immediately darted off after him, and succeeded in regaining his property, as valiantly as he had done at Coblenz ; after which he returned to his friends amidst a shower of stones from the disappointed Swiss boy and his fellows.

“ I never have a guide anywhere,” said Mr. Crinks, “ especially in Switzerland : nobody in his senses ever does. I either make friends with those who hire one, or find out the way by myself.”

“ You are quite right,” replied Jack. “ On these mountain roads the difficulty is, not in keeping on the direct path, but in trying to invent any other.”

“ I never take a thing more than is absolutely necessary,” remarked Mr. Crinks. “ With a knife, a bit of string, and a walking-stick, I

would go from here to the source of the Niger. Look at those people going up upon mules. Very good. They pay ten francs to frighten themselves to death, and shew us the way."

"Is it unpleasant, sir," asked Titus, "traveling upon mules to the top of the Rigi?"

"Rather exciting than unpleasant," answered Mr. Crinks. "It is very like riding a donkey up and down the monument."

After a slight repast of some bread and fruit, with a bottle of vin du pays, at the inn, our party started forth to commence the ascent of the sky-saluting mountain before them. For the first twenty minutes, after leaving Art, their road lay through smiling meadows, and rich orchards, dotted with chalets, and pasturing large quantities of cattle, each of whom carried a mellow-sounding bell round his neck; and the effect of many hundred of these, gradually softening in the distance, with the occasional *ranz des vaches* from the rude horn of the cow-boy, was indescribably beautiful in the calm, bright afternoon. Then the path began to ascend, as it became more rugged and tortuous, and the little stream of water at the side, which had rippled merrily through the meadows, formed itself into a succession of crystal cascades, tumbling over the blocks of granite,—the *débris* of former convulsions,—which each instant obstructed its downward progress. Mr. Ledbury, who had bought a mountain-pole, with

a chamois horn and iron-spike *proper*, marched onwards, with the air of a hardy mountaineer upon an expedition of great importance and labour, humming snatches of Anglo-Helvetian melodies ; followed by Jack, who was taking it very coolly, as he usually did everything. Mr. Crinks brought up the rear, not keeping to any particular path, but jumping from block to block, and starting off on one side or the other, whenever he saw anything worth collecting—a bit of mineral, or a blossom of the *colchicum autumnale*, which was now in full flower. And in this order they progressed, until they came to the first landing-place of the mighty flight of stairs that leads to the summit ; where they stopped for a few minutes, to collect their breath, and gaze upon the prospect—scarcely aware that they had already attained such an elevation. The little inn at Art, and the lake of Zug, were far below them ; and on their right the fatal valley of Goldau (on which the Rossberg mountain fell in 1806, eternally burying upwards of four hundred human beings beneath its fragments) was visible from one end to the other of its desolate extent.

There was a shepherd's hut on this landing, and several travellers had stopped to rest, and revive themselves with milk, fruit, and other pastoral refreshments. Amongst these was an exceedingly pretty English girl upon a mule, with an

ancient French lady of severe aspect and maidenly deportment, something between a nun and a governess, who appeared to look very sharply after her charge. They had been amongst the passengers in the boat from Zurich, and Mr. Crinks had discovered that the young lady had been at school there, but was now going to join her family, living at the British settlement of Interlachen, who were to meet her at Lucerne. She bowed slightly as she recognised her fellow-travellers, for etiquette is not over tight-laced upon the mountains; and, finding they were English, would possibly have allowed them to address her in any polite common-place remark upon the scenery or excursion, had not the *gouvernante* assumed a face very like the expression of a person eating an olive for the first time, and appeared anxious to depart. Whereupon Mr. Crinks, who declared it always fatigued him to sit down, and had, consequently, rested himself by climbing about the neighbouring rocks, gave the order to march once more, disturbing Mr. Ledbury, who had thrown himself upon a log, opposite the young lady, with his stick and knapsack, in the attitude of travellers in vignettes and songs, who are always gazing from a height, with a limited quantity of personal effects tied up in a bundle by their sides.

“What a pretty girl!” observed Mr. Ledbury,

as he reluctantly rose from his incipient dream of romance.

“ Now, don’t give way to any more susceptibilities, Leddy,” said Jack. “ Your love-adventures invariably have such unfortunate terminations that you cannot be too circumspect.”

Forests of pine, and deep ravines, succeeded the orchards : then came mountain-pastures, and woods of larch ; and still they went up, up, up, until, after four hours’ toil, they arrived at the end of their journey, and stood at the doorway of the Rigi Kulm hotel, gazing upon that wondrous panorama, which at first sight bewilders the senses of the spectator, even to painful confusion. Ledbury and Johnson appeared struck with awe at the sublime view ; and it was only the voice of Mr. Crinks, telling them they had better secure beds whilst there were any to be had, that recalled them back to the sensations of every-day life.

And they did right to lose no time in getting chambers : for, as usual, the Kulm was as full as it could hold. Indeed, when Jack first entered the *salle-à-manger* he began to wonder where on earth all the guests would get to at night. But the Kulm hotel resembles a carpet bag ; it is never so full but that something else may be crammed into it ; and the architecture of the whole establishment is so economical of space,

and ship-like, that antiquaries have sometimes thought the Rigi must have been the Ararat of the ancients, whereon Noah's ark having settled, and being left high and dry by the waters, was in time converted into its present form. It is, otherwise, certainly very difficult to conceive how it ever got up there. Our travellers were fortunate enough to secure a little cabin, with two camp beds, Mr. Crinks preferring to sit up all night, that he might start betimes in the morning.

There was a very excellent supper, of which some forty guests partook, including the young lady and her duenna, to the former of whom Jack and his companion paid great attention, in spite of all the *gouvernante's* frowns and looks of horror. Mr. Crinks, not finding room at the table, sat upon an inverted plate-basket at the side-board, where he appeared just as happy, and flirted with the hostess, who was (and we hope is still) a most attractive specimen of Swiss beauty; and a tolerable band of music, at least for the elevation, played during supper. Altogether, considering they were in the clouds, everything and everybody looked very merry and comfortable, except one gentleman, who, apparently bent upon making an effect, had come up in glazed boots, kid gloves, and a white waistcoat, and appeared to have found out his mistake. All the rest were as chatty and good-tempered as the excitement of their situation, so far above



the world, led them to be ; and it was with some regret that the party at last broke up to seek their respective dormitories, — a most facetious voyage of discovery.

The principal object of a visit to the summit of the Rigi being to see the sun rise, there are very praiseworthy arrangements at the hotel for keeping all the inmates wide awake until the morning. First, the unfortunate visitors who arrive too late to get beds establish *extempore* Travellers' Clubs in the *salle*, and incline to conviviality and harmony throughout the night. Then the thin fir walls of the rooms, in common with all *chalets*, are so tight and drum-like, that a knock upon the most distant reverberates all along the range with equal force. And as the muleteers and mules appear to rest together, and disagree continuously about room, it may be conceived that all these disturbances combined have the desired effect. But, besides all this, an unearthly horn is blown at every bed-room door half an hour before sunrise, to warn the guests that this important time is approaching ; and the performer never came out in greater force than at the entrance of the chamber of Mr. Ledbury and his friend.

“ I say, Jack, get up,” said Titus. “ I hear them moving, and there's a light in the passage.”

As he opened the door to procure it, he encountered Mr. Crinks, who had been pleased to

blow the horn that morning, having been convivial all night long.

"That 's right," said Mr. Crinks. "Look alive, or the sun will be up before you. It 's freezingly cold, so I have come to borrow a counterpane to wrap round me."

"They fine you ten sous for taking out the counterpanes," said Jack, reading a notice on the wall.

"Never mind," said Crinks. "You don't know what it is out of doors—I do. I advise you to have five-penn'orth a-piece."

Acting upon his suggestions, they hastily dressed, and, enveloped in the counterpanes and blankets, crept out into the open air. Many of the guests had already assembled, and were walking about in the fog to keep warm, or buying cups, paper-knives, salad spoons, and rulers of the peculiar white and tinted wood, stamped with the word "Rigi" in attenuated letters, as if they had been nipped up by the cold. Others had climbed up a species of wooden observatory, thinking they should see the sun sooner from this point; and the lights in the little pigeon-hole windows of the inn proved that nearly all were on the *qui vive*. Amongst the spectators was their pretty fellow-traveller from Zurich, looking as fresh and rosy as only English girls can look; and she was received with much gallantry and the

most courteous salutes by our travellers, who were delighted to find her chaperon had not risen.

At last, after much shivering and impatience, the sun obliged the company by rising, first lighting up the peaks of the highest mountains with his rosy tints, and then stealing down their sides, until the lower world became illuminated. It was certainly a magnificent sight, and repaid all the trouble taken to behold it ; but, this over, the spectators hurried back to their rooms, and for the most part went to bed again, except those who were preparing to start upon their downward journey.

“ Whew ! how sharp the air is ! ” exclaimed Mr. Crinks. “ May I beg to be allowed to make my toilet in your room ? ”

“ Certainly,” said Jack, “ if you can get in. We are obliged to stand on the beds while we open the door. The room is about as big as a bathing-machine.”

“ Well, make haste,” said Mr. Ledbury. “ I shall be a walking glacier presently ! ”

“ Chevy ! who gets there first ? ” shouted Mr. Crinks ; “ hi ! hi ! hi ! ” and off they started towards the hotel at full speed, Mr. Ledbury taking the lead. They shot through the door, knocking over some people who were coming out behind time, and rushed up stairs like wildfire into the corridor.

“ Here ’s the room,” cried Titus, as he pushed open the door.

“ First !” cried Jack, going suddenly ahead, giving a spring like a harlequin, and leaping on to the bed opposite the open doorway.

“ Second !” shouted Mr. Crinks, following him, as if he was playing the old school-game of “ jump little nagtail.”

“ Third !” exclaimed Mr. Ledbury, as he also leapt on to the bed.

And then a piercing shriek of a female in distress sounded in their ears. The dreadful truth burst upon them ere another instant had passed ; for, sitting up in the bed at their side, with a head-dress of pocket-handkerchief and black ribbon, screaming “ *Aux voleurs !*” at the top of her voice, was the French governess !

They had mistaken the room !

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE PASS OF THE ST. GOTHARD.—LEDBURY AND JACK ARRIVE  
AT MILAN.

THE screams of the French *gouvernante* at the unexpected intrusion of Mr. Ledbury and his companions threw the whole of the hotel into an instantaneous state of alarm. But, the moment our friends saw the terrible mistake they had committed, they lost no time in explanation or apology, but bolted from the room as speedily as they had entered it, and gained their own adjacent chamber, just as a head protruded from every door along the corridor. And no sooner were they assured of their safe retreat than Jack broke out into an uncontrolled fit of laughter, which entirely took away his breath, to the great agony of Mr. Ledbury, who was perfectly scared; whilst Mr. Crinks, hastily pulling a nightcap over his head, peeped out of the door, and inquired, in tones of great flurry and unconsciousness, the nature of the disturbance, or, as he more simply put the question, "What's the row?" To his great delight, nobody appeared capable of

giving him any information thereupon, and he closed the door again. But the old lady still cried out with great force ; and, having waited until some one came to her assistance, went into hysterics, from which, as violent attacks require violent remedies, she was only recovered by the exhibition of a powerful dose of lump-sugar in water ; of which saccharine drug three knobs were discovered in her purse by the chambermaid and her pupil, who had by this time returned. For your sugar is, with the French, a medicine of great importance ; and, independently of its therapeutical properties, forms, with water, a convivial beverage, which cheers without intoxicating ; and is, from its comparatively small expense, amazingly popular at private reunions.

But, although they had not yet been discovered, Johnson thought there was no occasion to run the risk of being identified ; so they finished their toilets with great speed, and came down to the *salle-à-manger*, where several of the travellers were already at breakfast. Fresh eggs, delicious honey, cottage-bread, and excellent coffee, were delicacies not to be trifled with at an elevation of six thousand feet above the level of the sea ; and, although Titus was amazingly nervous, and anxious to get off, yet Mr. Crinks was bent upon breakfast, in which resolve he was seconded by Jack. But, however, the meal was soon despatched, and then paying their bill, and

taking up their knapsacks, they once more started off upon their pilgrimage.

It was a fine bright morning, and the fresh mountain wind was blowing and roaring round the Kulm, as if it wished to annihilate the Rigi, for daring to lift its summit to so high an elevation in the clouds, which were the wind's own peculiar dominion, and now and then hurried across the path in misty volumes, one after the other, until they sailed far off with the breeze, to hide themselves from the sun in the deep shadows of the peaks on the Bernese Oberland. Then at times the clouds shut out the surrounding mountains altogether from the view, and directly afterwards they rolled away like the scenes of some pantomimic vision, revealing the snowy tops of the neighbouring Alps, glittering in the morning sunlight against the azure sky

Intending to descend to the village of Weggis, upon the lake of Lucerne, our tourists left the path they had followed on the previous evening at the Staffel,—an inn some fifteen minutes' walk from the Kulm,—and struck out into a new route. Mr. Crinks, who had not been to bed at all, did not appear in any way fatigued, but was quite as lively as when they had met him on the Zurich steamer the day before. Jack Johnson bore him excellent company in his various concerts; and Mr. Ledbury's self-possession returned in proportion as they left the Kulm be-

hind them, until at last he triumphed over all his fears of being arrested for an assassin, and forthwith hung upon the spot, or shot by bows and arrows,—not being exactly aware what course Swiss law usually took in similar cases. So they went merrily down the mountain, making a much shorter journey of it than they had done in ascending, and being enabled to watch the progress of a steamboat on the lake below them, as it left its tiny track of white behind it, stretching far away over the deep blue water, and was gradually making for the little village of Weggis, where they intended to embark for Altorf.

Mr. Crinks promised them his company to the top of the St. Gothard pass, where he said he must quit them for the road to the glaciers of Grindewald; and, in about twenty minutes after they got to Weggis, the steamer came up from Lucerne, and took them on board. There was previously a great deal of trouble to get the boat alongside the pier, for she seemed to have a tolerably independent method of her own with respect to her course; but at last this was accomplished, and then the captain, who stood on the paddle-box, wearing a straw hat with a tin anchor tied on to it, which he appeared, in the words of Mr. Crinks, to think no inferior malt beverage of, cried out,

“ Turn hed—forvuds !”



“What does he call that?” asked Titus : “it sounds like English.”

“It is meant for it,” replied Jack. “You may depend upon it the engineer is an Englishman.”

“I hope he is,” returned Mr. Ledbury : “we shall get some information from him.”

And to his gratification, as soon as the boat was fairly started, a very black face appeared through one of the iron coal-shoots upon deck, and then the entire man rose through it, after the manner of Mr. Wieland, when he comes up a circular trap where nobody expects him. Any doubt as to the country to which the individual belonged was immediately dispelled by his touching his hat to the tourists, and observing,

“Fine morning, gentlemen.”

“What time shall we get to Fluelyn?” asked Jack, in reply.

“Not afore the middle of the day, I reckon,” answered the engineer. “They don’t put themselves out of way much here : they gives you plenty of time to see the scenery, they does.”

“Is the captain a Swiss?”

“Regular born,” answered the man ; “only I’ve learnt him English. He knows three words capital : you heard two of ’em when we set off.”

“I thought that was meant for English,” observed Titus.

“ In course it was. When I first come here, and he wanted to stop, he used to call me ‘ long sam.’ ‘ Do you want it to stop ?’ says I ; ‘ Long sam,’ says he. I always laughs when I thinks of it. ‘ Stop,’ says I, ‘ Long sam,’ says he — ha ! ha ! ha ! ”

At which facetious reminiscence the engineer laughed aloud — our friends joining, as people often do, from courtesy, although they did not see the exact piquancy of the joke.

“ Have you been here long ? ” inquired Mr. Crinks.

“ Above a bit,” answered the other. “ I was first on the Chivity Vecchy station, and then in the Gulph of Venus to Triest ; but I likes this best, there’s so many of our country people always about here.”

“ I suppose you have a great number constantly passing backwards and forwards ? ” said Jack.

“ Not much else, I reckon,” answered the engineer. “ Lord bless you, it’s all very well to say nature made Switzerland what it is : I mean to say it’s the English. Them big hotels would all be teetotally bamboozled if we was to go. I see some queer sorts here, though, sometimes.”

“ I presume,” said Mr. Ledbury, “ that there are several varieties.”

“ Uncommon. The best part hav’n’t the least

notion of what they have seen, or where they are going ; but they think they must be obligated to push on, as if they were doing a match against time, and so they don't stop nowheres ever."

" There 's a lady in the after part of the boat with a little dog," observed Mr. Crinks. " I dare say she brought that from England with her."

" Oh ! that 's nothing," said the engineer. " One lady last week brought a averdupoise with her in a cage."

" A what ?" inquired Jack.

" A averdupoise—they little birds from foreign parts."

An attendant imp of darkness emerged from the depths of the boat at this moment, and requested the assistance of the engineer, who sank through the circular opening in the same mysterious manner as he had risen, and finally disappeared.

The lake of Lucerne, with its deep still reaches, and border of grand and sombre mountains, is perhaps the most calculated of all the *lachen* of Switzerland to excite the admiration of the traveller ; and Mr. Ledbury, who was of a romantic nature and enthusiastic temperament, sat at the head of the boat, as he had done upon the Rhine, with a guide-book in his hand, finding out the different localities. At last his face assumed a glow of animation, and he hummed an

air from *Guillaume Tell*, at the close of which he turned to Johnson, and observed,

“ That is the meadow of the Grütli, Jack. I begin to breathe the air of liberty.”

“ So do I,” said Mr. Crinks; “ and should like it much better, if we were not to leeward of the dead flax there.”

“ That is Tell’s chapel,” said Mr. Ledbury, not heeding the remark, and pointing to a little building like a summer-house, at the edge of the lake, on their left. “ It was there he leaped ashore from Gessler’s boat ”

“ Do you believe all that, Leddy ?” asked Jack.

“ Of course I do,” replied Titus. “ We have got some pictures about it at home.”

“ I suppose you are aware, though, there never was such a person as William Tell is represented ?”

“ Oh, you are joking, Jack,” said Mr. Ledbury.

“ I am not indeed. The whole story is one of the most singular make-ups that ever attained universal credence.”

“ But there is the meadow of the Grütli,” said Mr. Ledbury, pointing to a verdant platform of some sixty acres, “ where he met the conspirators.”

“ He never did, I can assure you,” continued Jack. “ Three conspirators *did* meet on the

Grütli, and plan the revolt ; but their names were Furst, Stauffach, and Melchthal ?”

“ And who was Tell, then ?”

“ Nobody can find out. It is very doubtful whether there ever was such a person at all ; and if there was, nobody knows where he was born, lived, or died.”

“ He must have been been something like his effigy at Rosherville Gardens,” observed Mr. Crinks, “ a man of straw. I have shot at him often, — seven arrows for twopence. By the way, I never believed that ripstone-pippin business myself.”

“ How very sorry I am that you have told me this, Jack,” said Mr. Ledbury. “ You have destroyed all my romance, and I was looking forward to seeing the market-place at Altorf.”

“ Well, you can see it now, just the same,” replied Mr. Crinks. “ There is no law against looking at it as long as you like. We shall be there in a couple of hours.”

At last the steamer came to Fluelyn, the port of its destination, where our three tourists disembarked, and without heeding the pressing invitations of the innkeepers to remain there for the night, pushed on at once towards Altorf. Mr. Ledbury, whose ideas of that village had been taken from a theatrical diorama, was somewhat disappointed at its forlorn appearance in reality ; and the tall painted tower in the market-place

ceased to interest him, as he was reassured by Jack that the apple, fabled to have been shot from the head of juvenile Tell by his father, was as unsubstantial as the apple of his eye, — all his eye, indeed, and nothing else.

It was still afternoon when they passed through Altorf. Not caring to stop there, they followed the St. Gothard road, and about six o'clock in the evening arrived at Amsteg, where the ascent of the pass may be said to commence. Here a comfortable *auberge* received them; and, after a dinner of hashed chamois, trout, and cutlets, they retired to rest in a large three-bedded room. The early hour at which they had risen, and the change of scene they had experienced throughout the day, somewhat wearied them. Even Mr. Crinks confessed that he was fatigued; and the trio were soon lulled to sleep by the brawling of the Reuss, which tumbles over rocks and precipices for twenty or thirty miles, including its terrific leap at the Devil's Bridge, and roars and chafes through the gorge of Amsteg with an unceasing tumult, that has obtained for it the name of the *Krachenthal*, or "Resounding Valley."

But Mr. Crinks was all alive before daylight the next morning; and the sun had scarcely risen when they started for the ascent of the St. Gothard, one of the finest of the Alpine roads, and perfectly worthy to rank on a level with the

Simplon. It was a toilsome journey ; but the succession of wonderful objects which every turn of the road presented, banished all thoughts of fatigue. Now they rested on the parapet of some bridge so high above the torrent, and with apparently such little attachment to the rock, that the architect might have undertaken a contract very plausibly to build castles in the air ; now Jack amused himself with rolling enormous blocks of granite to the edge of the precipices, over which he launched them, tearing and thundering down the gorge, snapping off young trees that came in their way like reeds, until they cleared the torrent in the extreme depth of the ravine with a bound, that sent them some distance up the opposite side. And Mr. Ledbury, who occasionally chose the old mule-track in preference to the carriage-road, distinguished himself in several daring conflicts with obtrusive goats respecting a question of right of way, greatly to the diversion of his friends, who watched his progress from the heights. So that altogether, with deviations and loiterings, the journey took twice the ordinary time to accomplish, and it was nearly dark when they passed the awful span of the Devil's Bridge, and traversing the mere cornice of roadway leading from it, at last perceived the lights of the inn at Andermatt about a half a mile off, where they once more halted for the night.

On the following morning Mr. Crinks wished

them good-b'ye, and started on his road to Meyringen, with an interchange of respective addresses in England, and all sorts of mutual promises to rout one another up on his return. A light snow had fallen in the night, and Ledbury's feet were somewhat galled with the hard walking of the previous days; so that he prevailed upon Jack to arrange with a return *vetturino*, who offered to take them down the pass for a comparatively small sum, and deposit them that same evening at Magadino on the Lago Maggiore. The driver, who was something between an image-man and a bricklayer's labourer, smoked pipes and sang songs all the way, in which he was joined by Jack Johnson, who sat on the box with him to see the country; whilst Mr. Ledbury, who had the inside of the voiture all to himself, put his legs on the opposite seat, and wearing his cap knowingly on one side, took up the bearing of an English traveller of distinction. His reason for this proceeding was to attract the attention of the female peasantry, who now gradually discarded their Swiss appearance, and assumed the dark eyes, olive skins, bright dresses, and sparkling head-gear of the south. And then one by one the *châlets* disappeared, and were replaced by white cottages and tall square towers, until every trace of Helvetia had departed, although they were still in one of its cantons. Next the names and signs changed. The *Hôtel de la*



*Poste* became *Albergo della Posta*,—the “general shop” mounted a small board, upon which the traveller read *Negozio di Vino*; and finally at Bellinzona, the town assumed every characteristic of Italy.

“We are a long way from home, Leddy,” observed Jack to his friend, as they were seated at supper in the inn of Magadino, overlooking the lake.

“I begin to doubt whether we shall ever get back again,” said Titus. “Let us drink all their healths.”

A bottle of creaming vino d’Asti formed the libation; and Jack drank to the Ledburys by name, but secretly felt that the whole pledge was meant for Emma. And then they were shown into a grand bed-room, with a fine fresco ceiling and a very dirty floor, wherein they remained until morning. We cannot say slept; for the night was so sultry, that they were compelled to have the windows open, through which a legion of musquitoes, and other winged abominations, entered from the lake, and carried on a determined war upon the travellers all night long, until Mr. Ledbury, for whom they appeared to affect a preference, knocked his face black and blue, in fruitless attempts to immolate them on the altar of their idolatry,—his own proper head.

The worn-out tub which creeps from Magadino to Sesto Calende, across the Lago Maggiore,

is certainly the worst steam-boat in the world. The engine is justly called a low-pressure one, inasmuch as it cannot be trusted with more than two pounds and a half upon the square inch without exploding ; and, as there is only one cylinder, if the piston-rod chances to stop when perpendicular, there is no sustained momentum to bring the crank down again. This was the case when Jack and Titus embarked, and the crew ingeniously remedied the defect by opening a trap-door at the top of the paddle-box, and kicking the wheel on with their feet until they got it to go. But still the rod worked a little out of suit, coming down every time with a thump against the bottom that shook the entire boat, and deranged the complacency of everybody on board ; except two priests, who took out their well-thumbed cornerless books the moment the boat started, and established a mass all to themselves at the side of the bowsprit, occasionally indulging in a little vocal harmony, for the edification of the passengers. And as the engine took eight hours to do about fifty miles of work, although the scenery on the edge of the lake was very picturesque, yet its monotony became wearisome after a time, and Jack was not sorry to land with his companion at Sesto Calende, where they first put their feet on Italian ground.

A large, unwieldy diligence, like an omnibus with a double row of seats on its roof, was wait-

ing at the door of the hotel to start for Milan, and, to their great annoyance, they learnt that all the places were taken. But, as it was market-day, and there were a great many country carts about, Jack thought that it was not improbable some of them were going back on the road, so he started off to see if he could make a bargain, leaving Titus to superintend the examination of their knapsacks at the custom-house. Mr. Ledbury was exceedingly polite to the officials, imagining Italy to be one vast country of bridges of sighs and brigands, and answered "*Oui*" to everything they said, although he did not understand them, especially in some long injunction, in which the word *passa-porta* was very prominent. But he caught the sound, and, looking in his pocket, found the document was all safe, and so imagined everything was right and proper.

By the time he had packed up the knapsacks again, Jack returned, with a light cart, the owner of which had agreed to take them both, for a small sum, as far as Rho, a village seven or eight miles from Milan, and twenty from Sesto Calende. This was about a four hours' trip, through a flat country, bordered with rice-fields and villages; and, when they arrived at their journey's end, the heat was so intense that Mr. Ledbury declared all thoughts of marching under his knapsack to Milan in the dust and glare, were quite out of the question. With some little

trouble Jack procured the solitary mule of the village, and mounting Titus thereon, he slung the knapsacks over the crupper, like panniers, and walked by his side, an urchin running behind, to bring back the animal.

At last the traceried pinnacles of Milan cathedral were visible before them in the glowing sunset; and a fine straight road, bordered with trees, led up to the magnificent *Arco della Pace*, at the end of the great Simplon route. As they passed through the barrier, a *douanier* came out, and demanded their passports, which were directly furnished. The man returned to the office; and, after some delay, appeared again, telling them that they must consider themselves in custody, as their credentials had never been *visée'd* at Sesto Calende! In an instant Mr. Ledbury's ideas of Austrian dungeons and life imprisonments returned with terrible force; and he felt so extremely nervous that he almost fell from his mule.

"Why, how is this?" asked Jack, somewhat enraged. "I thought you would see to everything whilst I looked after the cart at Sesto. Here's a scrape you have led us into."

"I see it all," said Mr. Ledbury wildly, clasping his hands in despair, and trying to move the pity of the guard by an imploring look. "They told me something about my passport, but I could not understand them. I thought they asked if I had got it. What will they do to us?"





J. Leach

Oh! dear! dear! to think of such an end to our excursion!"

"They will send us to prison," returned Jack, half in joke, half serious, "perhaps the galleys—who knows?"

Mr. Ledbury gave a groan of anguish, and remained silent. A small body of the guard, in their curious blue-tights and lace-up boots, now turned out of the *caserne*, and forming into order, requested our travellers to accompany them. Jack stuck his hands in his pockets, and walked on, somewhat angrily, closely followed by Titus on the mule; whose additional burthen of knapsacks gave the police an idea that they had arrested some deserters. In crossing the Piazza d'Armi they fell in with the band, who were returning to the barracks, and falling into their wake, constituted an imposing procession. As the music kept playing, a crowd of people collected, fixing all their attention upon the prisoners; and, in this manner, they were escorted through all the principal streets, until the convoy stopped at the grim-looking portals of the General Direction of Police.

## CHAPTER XV.

MR. PRODGERS SEEKS TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF.

ABOUT three weeks after the fête given by the De Robinsons, at which Mr. Prodgers had so ably assisted, that gentleman was pronounced by his "grinder" sufficiently crammed to present himself for examination at Apothecaries' Hall, whilst his knowledge was piping hot, before he lost it. For it is a pleasant thing connected with medical examinations, that nearly all the subjects which they embrace may be discarded from the mind the instant the ordeal is over, without the least detriment to any future professional career. And, since there are at this day individuals sufficiently talented to cure measles without knowing the difference between dandelions and buttercups; or, to reduce dislocations, without being able to make thermometers, the rest is as well forgotten. Neither is there the least occasion to know where rhubarb and bark come from, beyond where it can be retailed cheapest.

Mr. Prodgers obtained his diploma; and, after a month's holiday in the country, in which he



saw quite enough of the discomforts of rural practice to dissuade him from ever having anything to do with it, returned to town in search of a settlement. A great many "eligible opportunities" presented themselves; but the majority were from individuals whose only property was a brass plate, with their name thereon: and with this they migrated about, screwing it upon their doors, until they enticed somebody to buy a practice "capable of great improvement;" when they moved somewhere else, and established another with the same view. At last, one morning, he received a note from Mr. Pattle, the successor to Mr. Rawkins, stating that his health would not allow him to practise any longer—the usual plea in cases of commercial atrophy, or wasting away; and that he should be happy to make arrangements with Mr. Prodgers, who already knew the neighbourhood, for the disposal of his business.

The transfer was soon concluded; and in three weeks Mr. Prodgers was master of the concern to which he had served his apprenticeship. Mr. Pattle, who had grand ideas, had removed all the retail portion of the surgery, in consequence of which he got nothing to do; but Mr. Prodgers, who began to think seriously of maintaining himself, restored the shop to its pristine state, in the total absence of pride from his character. A new plaster-of-paris horse was put in the win-

dow ; and the teeth, arrayed upon fresh black velvet, occupied the centre pane. Alluring boxes of "Prodger's Pill of Vitality," in envelopes so gay that they looked as attractive as *bonbons*, were piled one upon the other in elegant pyramids ; all the strengthening plasters, from two-penny infantiles to sixpenny adults, were displayed to public view : the large bottles were refilled with coloured liquids, and their hieroglyphics newly gilt ; and, lastly, Mr. Prodgers invested himself and twenty shillings in a dressing-gown of imposing pattern, every button of which had an air of medical responsibility. An ancient woman, of staid demeanour, regulated his domestic economy ; and, since Bob had vanished into the workhouse some time back, after which all traces were lost of him, he hired another urchin for odd work. He let his second floor to a pupil at one of the hospitals, fresh from the country ; and then seated himself quietly down, to wait for patients : not informing any of his old friends of his abode, or they would have directly turned his house into a species of gratuitous tavern.

The first morning he regularly opened his shop he sold two ounces of salts, and a black-draught, which he formally entered in the first leaf of his day-book ; and the first night the bell roused him from his slumbers about two o'clock, to go and bail his lodger, who had fallen into the company

of ill-conducted students, and having indulged in fermented drinks, had committed various feats of unwonted valour, finally bivouacking in the Clerkenwell station-house. The next day he sold nothing; and the next night he was rung up by mistake to a parish patient. On the third morning the top box of the "Pill of Vitality" was purchased from the pyramid; and besides this, he took out a tooth for Mrs. Pym's housemaid next door, sold her a plaister for her cough; and was even spoken to, to attend a case which might require his services some two months hence, for fifteen shillings—underselling Mr. Koops by five, who had refused to come for less than a sovereign. This had been his best day, and, consequently, at night he smoked two principe cigars, ordered oysters for supper, and made merry.

It was not long before he became known, for he had been a favourite with most of the patients in the time of Mr. Rawkins, and some of his old friends began to rally round him. A dyspeptic policeman chose to pay him out of his own pocket for advice and medicines, doubting whether Mr. Koops understood his constitution; and this induced Mr. Prodgers to hang out a board, inscribed "Advice gratis from ten till eleven," by which means he got to make up several of his own prescriptions; for, of course, he always advised physic.

He had been in practice about a month, when, one night, or rather morning, he was awakened by a violent peal of the night-bell, which sounded as if it never intended to leave off. Jumping out of bed, and going to the window, he opened it, and asked who was there, and what they wanted."

"Is Mr. Prodgers at home?" inquired a muffled voice from one of two figures whom he discerned below.

"Yes—I'm Mr. Prodgers—who is it?"

"Please, sir, I want to see you directly," replied the voice.

Mr. Prodgers immediately hurried on his clothes, and catching up the rushlight, went down to the surgery, making sure an important new patient required his services. Upon opening the door two gentlemen entered, one of whom immediately exclaimed,

"So it is! I say Prodgers, old fellow! you're a sly fox—rather. But we've found you out, you see. I thought we should dig you up, some day. How d'ye do?"

"Tweak!" cried Prodgers, as he recognized his friend, and did not know whether to be friendly or annoyed. "And Mr. Simmons too—what has brought you here?"

"Oh, we have come to make a call," said Mr. Tweak, vaulting on to the counter, and sitting upon it, as if he intended to stay.

"But it's past three," yawned Mr. Prodgers, looking at a Dutch clock, with a skeleton who mowed nothing perpetually over the dial, that hung in the corner of the surgery.

"Yes, we know," said Tweak; "'tis the only leisure time we have for paying visits. Come—don't be blinking at that rushlight—eh?"

"I think you had better go," observed Prodgers gravely.

"Oh nonsense!" replied Tweak. "What are you going to stand?"

"I have not got anything."

"Oh yes you have," continued his visitor. "Light the gas, and boil some water. Here's a saucepan."

"Don't do that," exclaimed Prodgers; "that's fresh black draught. Now, Tweak,—there's a good fellow,—go home and come again to-morrow."

"We can't," remarked Mr. Simmons; "we have lost the key. Tweak threw it at a cat, and broke a kitchen-window, so we couldn't ask for it."

"I sha'n't go home," continued Tweak. "Let's drown care in a flowing bowl, and wreath our brows with chamomile flowers."

And, perfectly recollecting the position of the different drawers, he pulled out a handful of the chamomiles, and threw them at Prodgers's head.

"Now come, boys," said Prodgers, trying

the persuasive, "don't make such a noise : I've got a lodger."

"We'll go and rout him up," cried Tweak, seizing the rushlight.

"No, no," exclaimed Simmons; "get a bit of string, tie his toe to the bed-post, and then cry fire. I have done it often—it's out and out."

"But look here now," interposed Mr. Prodggers, arresting the rushlight, "what do you really want?"

"Want?—nothing," replied Tweak.

"Well, I don't keep it," answered the other.

"What else shall I give you to go away?"

"Can you lend us two shillings?" asked Tweak.

"With great pleasure," returned his friend, delighted at the chance of getting rid of his visitors.

"Here they are, and there's the door. Any other time I shall be delighted to see you. Good night."

Mr. Prodggers conducted his two friends to the doorway, and, with many expressions of gratitude to them for their departure, drew the bolt, and put up the chain after them, as they emerged from his surgery into the street. He then took his rushlight, and was returning up stairs to bed, sorry that the visit had not proceeded from a new patient, but glad to get to sleep again, in a conflict of indolent and industrious feelings, when another violent ring at the night-bell

sounded before he reached his chamber. He therefore descended again to the surgery, and inquired through the door, what was wanted.

“It’s us,” exclaimed a voice,—“Tweak and Simmons. We have come back all in hurry. Open the door, Percy.”

“Oh! don’t!” cried Mr. Prodgers, in accents of despair. “Now go on—do.”

“No, no,” continued Tweak, speaking somewhat earnestly. “Here’s a job—really—joking apart. Such a row!—there’s somebody dead. Open the door.”

“It won’t do,” said Prodgers. “Besides, if they’re dead what is the use of a doctor?”

“Why, a guinea for the inquest,” replied Tweak. “Indeed, Percy, it is no sell. Open the door, and make haste, or Koops will be there before you. The police are sure to go to him first. They say it’s a woman.”

There was something so anxious in the student’s address, that Prodgers directly unfastened the bolt, and allowed them to enter. Again assuring him that no deception or practical joke was intended, Tweak took his friend’s hat from the counter, and forcibly thrusting it on his head, half dragged him into the street.

“Round here,” said he, as they turned the corner, “where you see that man going. Look at the lanterns!”

In effect, several lights appeared collected to-

gether at the end of a narrow thoroughfare, which led towards the New River ; and, as they came up to the spot, they perceived a crowd of people surrounding the door of a public house, composed chiefly of the police, and such idlers as were about at that advanced hour of the night.

A bystander soon gave Prodgers information as to the nature of the occurrence :—a body had been taken from the river, and they were conveying it on a shutter to the nearest inn.

“ I heard the splash,” said the man, “ when I was at the corner of St. John’s Street, and I says to my pardner, ‘ There’s som’dy a throwed thesselves into the water ;’ so we went back.”

“ And how did you get the body out ?” asked Prodgers.

“ Ah ! there was the job, along of the railings. How she got in I can’t tell ; but they poor things must be desperate when they comes to this.”

“ It is a woman, then,” observed Prodgers ; and, pushing through the crowd, he continued, “ I am a medical man : let me into the house.”

A surgeon is always treated with deference by the crowd at an accident, and the people fell back, allowing him to enter, followed closely by Tweak and Simmons. The body had been placed upon the table, and the innkeeper was now squabbling with the police upon the impropriety of its being taken there.



“ Now, don’t be so crusty,” said the inspector, who appeared to know the host. “ If she ’s quite gone, you get the inquest ; and if she ain’t, you has a guinea.”

“ Was she long in the water ?” asked Prodgers.

“ A matter of five minutes,” replied a man.

“ Then there may still be a chance,” said Prodgers. “ Now, will you be good enough to clear the room,” he continued to the police. “ These gentlemen can assist me in all I want ; and everybody else is in the way. Have you any females in the house ?” he asked, addressing the innkeeper.

The man answered in the affirmative, — his wife and the servants were up stairs.

“ Then let them both be called, and tell them to bring down their blankets,” said Prodgers. “ Put a few chips in the fire-place — the boiler is still warm ; and, for the second time, clear the room.”

Besides the importance attached to every word which falls from the lips of a medical man in moments of pressing urgency, the almost supernatural power which he is supposed at such times to possess over the balance of life and death ; besides this, his remarkable composure, when all about him is disordered and uncertain, — his steady forethought and unruffled intelligence, which ceaseless intimacy with scenes of suffer-

ing and uncertainty can alone induce, tend still further to augment his influence. The people were directly ordered from the room, the proprietor rekindled the fire on the still incandescent embers, and Prodgers, assisted by his friends, now orderly and tranquil, commenced his preparations for endeavouring to restore animation to the body before them.

“She’s been a pretty girl,” said the policeman, as he parted back the long wet hair from her face. “Poor thing ! — the old story, too.”

As he spoke, he drew his finger over her cold cheek, on which a dull red was visible upon the livid flesh below. The paint came off, and a white mark followed his hand.

The females who had been called in the meantime now came into the room. They were decent elderly women, and, notwithstanding their extreme flurry, appeared anxious to afford every assistance. By the advice of Prodgers they quickly undressed the body, and enveloped it in the blankets they had brought down with them; whilst the others made up the fire, and filled some bottles with hot water.

“Poor young creature !” said the landlady : “there is not a great deal in the pockets. Yes — here is some money and a letter.”

“Give it to me,” said Prodgers. And taking the document, he carefully unfolded the wet

paper, and read the following note, bearing the date of the day before, and written in an irregular, but apparently disguised, hand :—

“ DEAR NED,

“ ‘ Pigey’ will be with you to-morrow, and seems like to bleed. If you lift up the cloth of the table and scrape the wood, you can make the middle pockets draw for the hazards. I have done the new moulds ; send Letty for them after dark to-morrow night to the crib — they are slap up.

“ Yours,

“ THE MILLER.”

“ To Mr. Morris, at Matthew’s beer-shop,  
Steven’s Rents.”

“ That’s the house as we have been looking after, I’m certain,” said the policeman. “ The money’s as bad as can be,” he continued, taking up the half-crown and biting it, “ and all from the same stamp, with the same flaw. We’ve got ’em at last.”

“ Well, we have something else to think about now,” said Prodgers. “ You can keep the door, and I will call you when I want you.”

And, thus speaking, he turned his attention towards the body, commencing a series of simple operations, which the landlady, whose sole ideas of recovering drowned persons were confined to

rolling them upon tubs, and holding them up by their heels, watched with incredulous expression of countenance.

They alone upon whom the responsibility has fallen of attempting to arrest the last gleam of fitting existence in its darkening tenement, — to kindle by their own breath the dull remaining embers of life, which too eager or precipitate a course might extinguish for ever, — who have felt they were regarded by the surrounding crowd as dispensers of life or death, upon whose will it depended, whether the senseless object of their earnest care became once more a thing of vitality and reason like themselves, or a clod of decaying earth, — they alone can understand the deep and all-absorbing feelings of the surgeon, whilst superintending the process of restoring suspended animation. The fearful anxiety which attends the result of each essay, as the clammy grasp of death seizes with firmer embrace upon its victim, until the last sad conviction that all is finished forces itself upon his mind; and the painful suspense ere the least throb of returning pulsation calls for renewed hope and exertion, — those trying moments can be but faintly imagined beyond the circle of that profession, whose pilgrimage on earth is doomed to pass but amidst the most distressing scenes of anguish and mortality.

And long and earnestly did Mr. Prodgers ap-

ply himself to his important task. The hand of the clock in the corner of the room crept round the smoke-discoloured dial ; and as it progressed, hope ebbed away with every heavy beat of the pendulum, which still kept on its dull, unchanging swing, as if to mark the triumph of time over mortality. But still no plan was left untried,—no zeal relaxed that appeared likely to assist the process. With the fingers of one hand upon the pulse, and the other placed upon the chest, from whence it was but now and then removed, to examine the pupil of the half-closed eye, he directed his companions in their attempts to produce an artificial respiration ; and for upwards of an hour did they persevere.

“Hush !” whispered Prodgers, as if fearful of disturbing the silence even by his own voice. “I think the hand seems warmer. Perhaps it is only my fancy.”

As he spoke he placed his ear upon the chest, in close contact with the skin, and listened attentively. You might have heard the spiders creep along their lurking-places.

“There is a beat !” he cried joyfully, after a few seconds’ pause, “another—the heart is acting ! Now—do not lose an instant—she will come to, after all.”

And, indeed, before long the girl showed signs of returning life. The skin lost the livid hue that had overspread it, and a few rapid convulsive

sobs shook the chest. Then the temperature of the hands increased,—slowly, it is true, but progressively; and the action of the pulse commenced, first in the irregular beating of a small, thread-like vessel, faint and intermittent, until it was distinct and regular. And in a few minutes a series of deep-drawn sighs ended in a copious flood of hysterical tears, which were cheerfully hailed as the signs of returning consciousness.

The women placed a pillow underneath the head of the patient, and covered her with fresh blankets, converting the table into a rude bed. It was some little time before she became clearly sensible of her situation; but, when the truth broke upon her, she again burst into tears. This time, however, they were natural.

The girl started up as the light broken upon her, and cast a wild glance round the room, and at its occupants. And then, as the coverlids fell from her shoulders, she gathered them hastily around her, and clung towards the landlady, who was standing at her side, as if she claimed protection from some impending threat.

“Don’t be frightened, deary,” said the hostess, in a kind tone of assurance. “You are with friends here—nobody will harm you.”

As she spoke, the girl fixed her eye upon the policeman who was standing at the door. She gave a slight start of apprehension, and looked anxiously about the table.

“Where are—my clothes—my pocket?” she asked, in a faint voice.

“They are all safe,” returned the landlady. “I have taken care of them. Do you think we may give her a little drop of cordial, doctor?” she continued, addressing Prodgers.

“It must be a very little,” he replied. “And now, see if you cannot get her to bed. She will still require some care.”

“She shall go in mine,” said the servant; “for it will be morning soon. I can stay with her till then.”

“And I will come and see her again to-morrow,” said Prodgers. Then turning to the proprietor, he added, “I suppose you can carry her to her bed-room.”

The man raised her in his arms, and prepared to carry her up stairs; but, as he did so, the girl once more asked for her clothes, some of which were steaming on the back of a chair before the fire. The landlady took them in her hand, and then the party went slowly from the room.

In two minutes the owner of the house returned, and tendered “a drop of something to drive the cold away” to Prodgers and his companions. Then, assuring him that every care should be taken of the unhappy girl, he supposed there was nothing more to be done, and wished them good night, as they departed with the policemen.

“And now I shall go home to bed,” said Prodgers sleepily ; “for I am very tired. You fellows had better come too.”

“Well, I don’t mind,” said Mr. Tweak. “I don’t see that I can go anywhere else.”

“You are very lucky, gentlemen, to have finished all your work,” observed the policeman, as they stood in the open air again. “Ours is just beginning.”

“How so ?” asked Prodgers.

The man took the note from his pocket which had been found upon the girl, and throwing the glare of his lantern upon it, replied,

“Because this puts us up to somebody we have been after for the last twelvemonth. We must be off directly to Somers Town.”

“I hope you will be successful,” replied Prodgers. “Good night.”

And, as the police turned off along the side of the river, Prodgers, Tweak, and Simmons bent their steps, with weary limbs and half-closed eyes, towards the residence of the first-named gentleman.



## CHAPTER XVI.

GOOD FORTUNE COMES TO JACK.—A DANGEROUS DILEMMA AT MILAN.

UPON being introduced to the police, it required all Jack's knowledge of foreign tongues to make the authorities understand that Ledbury and himself were not deserters, but that the irregularity in the passports were solely attributable to their own ignorance of the *visées* that would be required, having forgotten that they had passed from Switzerland into Lombardy. But the Austrian police are not very easily satisfied; and, after much wrangling and uncertainty, during the whole of which time Mr. Ledbury believed the next minute would see him being escorted to the galleys, the authorities finally determined that our travellers should deliver up their present informal passports as hostages, and should consider themselves, at the same time, under the *surveillance* of the police, without permission to leave Milan, until the pleasure of the government should be made known to them. They were then allowed to depart.

By the recommendation of an Anglo-Italian courier who was waiting at the *bureau*, they proceeded to the *Albergo della Croce Bianca*, a neat second-rate inn in the Corso di Porta Vercellina, one of the gendarmes accompanying them to note down their residence. Jack was at first exceedingly annoyed, for it was uncertain how long they might be detained in the city; but the feelings of Titus still bordered upon despair. The master of the inn, however, a comfortable Milanese, who spoke the worst French possible, assured them they had nothing to fear, and at the same time ventured to suggest that a good dinner might somewhat tranquillize their excitement. And this had the desired effect, as much from its excellence as its novelty; for they dined in the open air, in the court of the inn, which had galleries running round it, like our coaching hotels in London, but covered with luxuriant grape-vines. The evening was so lovely, that the flame of the candles on the table never wavered; and *vetturini* were arriving and departing the whole time; whilst several small tables were placed about, at which visitors were drinking, chatting, or playing endless matches of that peculiar Italian game of fingers, which somewhat resembles our schoolboy sport of "Buck, buck—how many horns do I hold up?" All this afforded great amusement to Jack and Titus, who, after a short stroll in the city, always gay and

well-peopled in the evening, returned home to bed, and slept very soundly after the toils and annoyances of a very long day.

The next morning, having made their toilets with as much nicety as their slender wardrobes would allow, they started off to fulfil the object of their journey, and procure the required signature to the document with which old Mr. Ledbury had intrusted them. Mr. Howard, who had a pleasant *casina* just within the *Porta Orientale*, received them very politely; and, when he heard of their awkward situation, begged that during their stay at Milan they would make his house their own. He was much taken with Jack's intelligence and frank manner; and so well did they agree, that before two days had passed, having questioned Titus somewhat closely as to his friend's testimonials, it was arranged that, upon their return to England, if Johnson chose to become Mr. Howard's agent in London, there was a clear two hundred a-year for him as long as he proved deserving of the trust. And this was a piece of fortune Jack never in his wildest dreams looked forward to. Indeed, he went back to the inn in such a whirl, that passports, police, and Austrian prisons were alike forgotten: he thought only of his return to England, and, above all, the opportunity of making a proud and independent proposal to old Mr. Ledbury for the hand of his daughter. And Titus, with his good heart, en-

tered into all his friend's happiness. It was fate, he was sure, that had first thrown them together, and that had induced them to take this lucky journey ; and, if he had only got his passport all comfortably *en règle*, he would not have one thing else in the world to care about.

In a day or two after their arrival Mr. Howard was compelled to leave Milan for Padua, where his presence was required upon the projected line of railway. Our travellers dined with him the last evening, and he then gave Jack the necessary introductions and documents for him to enter upon his new office, when he returned to England. Jack, who had attended every day at the passport office without effect, made some allusion to the probability of their still being detained at Milan when he returned, but was again assured by Mr. Howard, that all would be settled well, although they did not hurry themselves about such things. And, having accompanied him to the office of the *Velociferi* or conveyances at six miles an hour, they saw him into the diligence, which left for Verona, Padua, and Venice, at eleven at night, and then went back to the *Croce Bianca*.

A lively scene awaited them at the inn. A party of wandering minstrels, consisting of three men and a girl, had just come to Milan from the fair at Breschia, one of the largest in Northern Italy, and were playing on guitars in the court.

Several of the young men who had been enjoying themselves in the *café* attached to the inn, now came out, and, pushing the tables on one side, asked the girl to waltz, which she did with them, one after another. Then two or three more females made their appearance—chiefly grisettes, or rather those who would have been called grisettes in Paris—from the adjacent shops; and at last the dance became general, involving so many flashing eyes and ankles that Mr. Ledbury was well nigh beside himself. The girl who accompanied the musicians was very beautiful,—so handsome, indeed, that, with an attendant goat, she might well have passed for a second Esmeralda; and the men who were with her took advantage of her comeliness to send her round for money after each performance. Ledbury was drinking wine at a table with Jack, and, with his usual susceptibility, the girl's eyes so shot him through and through, that the *zwanzigers* and *kräutzers* were falling into the small tray she presented for contributions as fast as he could take them from his pocket, in return for which she gave him such bewitching smiles, such mellifluous "*Grazie signore's*," that Jack soon saw his interference would be necessary to keep Titus within bounds.

"Now keep cool, Titus," said Jack. "Recollect what I have so frequently told you. Your love-making always brings you into trouble."

“ I know,” remarked Mr. Ledbury ; “ it’s all right. Have some more wine, Jack. I shall ask her to dance the Tarantella.”

“ My good fellow,” returned Jack, aghast, “ what on earth do you know about the Tarantella ?”

“ I have seen it danced in Masaniello, at the theatres,” answered Mr. Ledbury. “ I think I should make a hit.”

“ You would make a fool of yourself, Leddy, and get into the same scrape that you did at Paris. Let me recommend you not to try any such thing.”

“ Well, I suppose I may ask her for a quadrille ?” resumed Titus.

“ Oh, quadrille away,” said Jack, laughing at his friend’s pliant disposition. “ Dance horn-pipes, or anything you like. I see you are a lost man.”

As Ledbury rushed forwards to request the girl’s hand, or rather her waist, such being the prevailing style for the quadrille, another gentleman approached her at the instant for the same object. The second cavalier was very handsome ; but the girl’s affections inclined towards Mr. Ledbury’s liberality, and, although the other certainly had the start in addressing her, she put down her guitar, and took Mr. Ledbury’s arm. The set immediately formed, and the rejected

gentleman returned to the table, rather cross than otherwise.

• Mr. Ledbury could not speak to his partner with any remarkable fluency, so, in lieu of conversation, he assumed his most distinguished positions to create an impression, and danced with much elegance. All went on very well until the fourth figure, when the top and bottom couple were to go hands four round,—not quietly, as we do it at home, but laying hold of each other with a tight grasp, and spinning round and round with considerable velocity. Titus kept up for the first revolution or two very well; but presently he felt his hand slipping, and directly afterwards leaving go his hold, he was whirled off by the centrifugal force, and shot, like a cinder from the fire, right on to the table where the rejected cavalier was sitting, amongst all the glasses and wine-bottles.

Of course there was a “row” immediately. The man commenced abusing Ledbury in no very measured terms; and Titus, from his ignorance of the language, could return no answer. Whereupon Jack took up the cudgels for his friend as well as he was able, and turned all the wrath of the Italian upon his own head, which at last got so excessively gross and ungoverned, that Johnson would have nothing more to say to him. As he left the table, however, the man collected all his anger for an outbreak of passion, and applied

such unpardonable epithets to his antagonist, that Jack, without more ado, turned back again and knocked him down. And then, seeing that he did not appear in any hurry to get up again, for fear of a repetition of the attack, Jack left him where he was, and, taking Ledbury by the arm, elbowed his way through the rest of the party before they well knew what had occurred, and marched up to their bed-room.

“We should have had to fight against long odds,” said Jack, “if we had waited there a minute longer.”

“You have hurt your knuckles, Jack,” remarked Ledbury, calling his friend’s attention to his hand.

“Never mind,” said Jack, “it has given them a lesson. We shall be treated with respect in future, you may depend upon it. I see they are breaking up below,” he continued, looking out of window. “No matter,—we will not go down again.”

As soon as their excitement was over, they prepared to go to bed, and were commencing to undress, when they heard a low, hurried tap at the door of the room. Upon opening it, to their great surprise, they perceived the music-girl, who, apparently much flurried, begged Johnson to step down stairs for a minute or two. There was something so earnest in the request, that he ac-



accompanied her directly, leaving Mr. Ledbury in a state of great wonder and uncertainty.

In three minutes he returned, evidently much embarrassed, as he replied to Mr. Ledbury's anxious question of what was the matter.

"Here's a devil of a business!" said Johnson, "as unlucky an affair as can well be."

"How?—for goodness' sake, Jack, tell us what you mean!" exclaimed Titus, much alarmed.

"The fellow we had the row with is in the *bureau* of the police, and recollected us. One of the men who belongs to the music party heard him say as he left that we were detained here as it was, but three months in prison would not do us any harm."

"What for, Jack?" cried Ledbury, in an agony of terror.

"For the assault. It seems a blow is an awkward thing at Milan, and not likely to be looked over."

"We must leave the place immediately," said Titus.

"And where are our passports?"

This simple question destroyed all Mr. Ledbury's hopes at once. He asked wildly two or three times what would be done, and throwing himself on the bed, groaned aloud.

"Come, come, Leddy," said Jack, "this is of no use: let us see what chances are in our

favour. The man with the guitar seems a good fellow enough. He says his party are off this night for a fête at Arona, on the Lago Maggiore ; and that, if we can get clear of the city, he will take us on in his *carrétta*. All the lot travel together."

" But how can we get away from the inn ? It's nearly one o'clock in the morning."

" That is soon settled," replied Jack. " I will go and see about that part of the story, if you will pack up the knapsacks."

And so saying, Jack went down stairs, whilst Mr. Ledbury, in great confusion, collected their effects, and stuffed them into the knapsacks as well as his intense fright and *bouleversement* would allow him to do.

" I have made it all right at the inn," observed Jack, as he returned. " The landlord thinks we are merely going with these people to see the fête at Arona, and shall return with them. He did not want me to pay him, but I insisted upon doing so. Are you all ready ?"

" Quite," said Ledbury, as pale as death, and buckling the last strap of his knapsack.

" Then *en avant*," cried Jack, whom the danger had excited until he was ready for anything, " and the devil catch the hindmost ! I don't know whether he is not preferable to the Austrian police."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE FLIGHT OVER THE SIMPLON.

As they turned into the street leading to the Piazza D'Armi,—the Hyde Park of Milan, if it may be so called,—everything was still as the grave. The night was dark, but a few lamps were glimmering in the distance round the boundary-wall of the esplanade; and a light in the small building at the barrier gate guided them towards the arch at the end of the great Simplon road through which their journey lay. As they approached it, great caution was necessary to avoid being seen by the guard; for their appearance and the late hour would have certainly caused them to be arrested.

“We must not go through the gate,” said Jack; “they would be safe to see us.”

“Then how are we to get out?” asked Ledbury.

“Climb the wall,” was the laconic answer of Johnson.

Titus looked aghast at the wall, under whose shadow they were now consulting. It was twelve feet high, and perfectly plain.

"We can never get over that, Jack," he murmured, in despair.

"Nonsense, man ; see how I shall manage it. We must look out as sharply as we can for a tree that grows against it."

Still keeping close to it, they crept along until they came to one of the trees forming the inner belt of the inclosure, that was planted nearly close to it, with some overhanging branches. To run up it almost like a squirrel was to Jack the work of half a minute ; and then hooking up the knapsacks with the chamois horn at the end of his staff, he proceeded to hook up Mr. Ledbury, which was a task of no ordinary difficulty. But Titus's long legs and arms somewhat aided him in the ascent, and at last they both crept along a limb, and got to the top of the wall.

"Hush !" cried Jack suddenly ; "for God's sake don't move an inch ! The patrol is coming round to change the guard. I can hear them."

"We shall be shot !" gasped Titus.

"Nonsense !—lie down at full length upon the top of the wall. They will be gone directly."

It did not take Mr. Ledbury much time to follow the directions of his friend. He clung to the wall, as Jack observed, like a brick, and appeared almost a portion of it. After two minutes of keen anxiety the guard passed, and then Jack prepared to descend.

[illegible]



*Leech*

"What must we do to get down?" asked Titus. "I can't see the ground."

"We can't help that," replied Jack; "we must drop at all events. Let us send out a pilot first."

So saying, he threw down the knapsacks, which fell noiselessly upon the grass; next, letting himself down as far as his hands would allow him, he dropped safely to the ground; and then broke Ledbury's fall, who was so exceedingly nervous that he could scarcely lay hold of anything. This accomplished, they took up their knapsacks, and, cutting across a field to the Simphon road, found the party waiting to receive them, as agreed upon.

All Mr. Ledbury's gallantry had vanished, and although he sat next to the handsome singing girl in the *fourgon*, he never said a word, but remained in great terror all the journey. They did not travel very fast, and day was breaking when they arrived at the banks of the Lago Maggiore. Here their companions parted with them; after Jack had remunerated them somewhat liberally; and then he hired a boat to take them on board the steamer, soon after she had left Sesto Calende, by which means all chance of their being asked for their passports would be avoided.

As luck had it, the morning was very foggy, and in half an hour they were once more on

board the rickety *Colombo*. When she arrived at Baveno, they hired another boat immediately, as if to see the Isola Bella; because, Baveno being in Piedmont, if they had gone on shore they would have been discovered immediately. But, instead of going to the island, they ordered the man to proceed up the river Vedro, which flows into the lake from the Simplon. On arriving at a sequestered part of its bank they landed, and proceeded onward, having already cleared three *visées*, from either of which they would have been sent back under an escort to Milan.

It was now between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning; so they strapped on their knapsacks, and walked along the road until they were overtaken by a travelling carriage. As the inmates were asleep, the postilion smoking, and looking only over his horse's ears, and the rumble empty, Jack proposed that they should take possession of it, which, after running behind for some little distance, they did, and were carried as far as Vogogna by one P.M. Here they crept down unperceived, and trudged on until the *voiture* again passed them, when they got up again. And, following this plan at the different villages, they finally reached Domo Dossola about four, when they were both so fatigued, that Jack determined to wait two hours for rest and refreshment; although Ledbury, in spite of being very exhaust-



ed, was anxious for them to keep still on the move.

The sun had gone down when they left Domo, and large dark patches of clouds were coming angrily up from the windward, giving promise of a stormy night. For the first time, Jack felt uncomfortable, although he kept his inquietude to himself; for he knew that the instant Ledbury saw his misgivings, it would be all over with him. But yet he did not disguise the fact that an arduous journey was in prospect.

"Do you see those mountains?" he asked, pointing to the terrific Simplon before them, whose outlines were now rapidly fading in the approaching darkness. "Well, we must cross them before to-morrow morning. They do not look very inviting."

The dinner had somewhat refreshed them, and they speedily traversed the last of those highly-cultivated plains, which form so remarkable a contrast to the mountain-road directly beyond them. It was soon dark, and, by the time they had got to the foot of the pass, and ascended the first rise to the magnificent Pont de Crevola, they could not see the turbulent Vedro, which rushes past the mighty single pillar of masonry, although its deafening roar told them that it was still hurrying on its rapid course. Neither of them spoke much, for the commencing ascent made heavy demands upon their breath,

without wasting it in words ; and, in addition to this, Mr. Ledbury was in a state of such extreme terror, as the scenery became wilder, and the brawling of the torrent at the side of the road more angry, whilst it leaped over and amongst the huge blocks of granite which intercepted its course, that he did not feel at all inclined to open his mouth, but kept close to Jack, especially when they passed any of the gloomy galleries under which the road is carried at several parts of the passage. And then the scenery got still more wild and savage,—doubly frightful by the gloom in which it was enveloped. The last traces of cultivation which here and there clung in patches about the sheltered places on the rocks disappeared,—one by one the chalets and mountain-inns were left behind, until no buildings appeared but the dismal Refuge, or the small and lonely chapel,—both tokens of hazard and uncertainty. And still they kept ascending, —unalteringly, steadily ascending, until they entered the appalling gorge of Isella, impaled by its perpendicular barriers of granite, from whose summits cascades of water, icy cold, were tumbling in all directions, now carried under the road to increase the already swollen Vedro, and now rushing across the pass, with a force that threatened to carry them off their legs, did they slip from the perilous stepping-stones, whose situation they could scarcely determine by feeling with

their poles before they ventured forward. And then their path ran close by the side of the torrent, which overleaping its bounds, or impeded in its course, threatened every minute to engulf them in its whirling hell of waters, that every now and then swept over what was three years ago a fine and level carriage-way.

At length the road quitted the river, and climbed up the side of the gorge, leaving the water far beneath it. As the noise diminished in the distance, Mr. Ledbury felt somewhat reassured, and hazarded a few questions about the localities. A few stars, too, were beginning to peep-out from the sky above the ravine, and presently the hour of ten sounded from some steeples in the direction they were journeying.

"We have been four hours on the road, Jack, already," observed Titus. "I am glad we are coming to something like life again."

"You would not be so happy if you knew what place it was," replied Johnson. "This must be Gondo, the Sardinian frontier. Now we shall have to look sharp enough. How are your eyes, Leddy?"

"Rather sleepy," returned Titus, giving a yawn in confirmation.

"Oh, come," said Jack, "you must not think of anything of that sort yet. We have scarcely done a third of our journey."

As they turned an angle of the road, a bright

ray of light shot across the path from a building a little way ahead, and the dark outlines of one or two military-looking figures were plainly visible.

"There they are !" exclaimed Jack hurriedly.

"Who?" asked Mr. Ledbury; "the Austrian Police?"

"No, no, — the *douaniers*. If they see us, we are done for. We must try and pass the custom-house some other way."

"I do not see how," said Titus.

"Nor I neither," returned Johnson. "Let us reconnoitre."

At first he thought of attempting to climb down from the carriage-way to the level of the river, and keep along its side until the frontier was passed; but the descent was so deep and precipitous, that this plan was directly abandoned. Going along the road was to insure instant detection; for the authorities on boundaries have sharp eyes and ears, so that the only plan left was to endeavour and pass behind the *douane*, which was built nearly against the high granite rocks that hemmed in the gorge. Telling Ledbury to use every caution, Jack led the way, walking with no little difficulty upon the slanting ground which rose directly from the road. They soon came up to the building, and passed so closely behind it, that they could look into the room, where one or two of the officials were lying carelessly down upon a wooden couch, or hud-

dling round a fire. Ledbury followed Jack in silence, but quite mechanically. The whole business had brought about such an overturning of his ideas, not suited to such exciting excursions, that if any one had asked him whether he was marching upon his head or his heels, it would have taken some little time for him to collect his intellects and return a proper answer. Jack was less flurried; and when they once more gained the road on the other side of the station, and felt somewhat assured, he indulged in a little pantomime, less elegant than expressive, spreading his thumb and fingers into radii, and raising them to a level with his nose, in the direction of the *douane*, indicative of triumph and intellectual superiority.

“So far so good,” observed Jack. “Now Leddy, brisk up. Take a pull at the wicker bottle, and start off again.”

A small quantity of cognac infused a little fresh energy into Mr. Ledbury, and he walked on with his friend through the gloomy and miserable village of Gondo, and by its high, prison-like inn, now wrapped in repose. There was a building which Jack supposed to be the office on the Swiss frontier; but no lights were visible, and they passed by without any interruption.

As they left the wretched chalets of the hamlet behind them, they appeared to take leave of the habitable world, and advanced into the celebrated, but awful, Gorge of Gondo. It was now

nearly midnight, and quite dark ; whilst, to increase their perplexity, it began to rain, as the stars went in. On arriving at the Grand Gallery, Jack proposed that they should rest for a short time under its shelter, to which Ledbury gladly agreed, taking off their knapsacks for the ten minutes they were there, and sitting upon them.

“ Well, this is an excursion we never anticipated,” said Jack. “ However, it will be something to talk about when we get home.”

“ Home !” exclaimed Mr. Ledbury despondingly. “ I only wish we may. How cold it is getting.”

“ Because we are up very high,” said Jack. “ You will find the rain will turn to sleet before long, and finally to snow. Have a pipe, Leddy, — I shall.”

“ No,” answered Titus, “ I can’t smoke — I can’t do anything. What a dreadful journey this is !”

“ Much better than the prison at Milan, where we should have had a chance of being by this time. There, look at that tobacco—it makes you warm to watch it.”

And Jack, having lighted his pipe, appeared in two minutes just as much at his ease as if he had been in Mr. Rawkins’s old back-parlour.

“ Halloo, Leddy, — don’t go to sleep,” he cried, as he spoke twice without receiving any answer. “ If that’s it, we must be off. Here,

— I'll help you with your knapsack. On it goes again."

Very unwillingly Titus left the gallery, and they once more started, walking on until they came to the seventh and eighth houses of refuge. Had there been any tokens of life within, Johnson might perhaps have been induced to stay; but everything was dark and quiet. So they went on, traversing the valley of Algaby, and then ascending one of the steepest parts of the road, encumbered with blocks of granite and gneiss, which the torrents are constantly detaching from the mountains.

Singular as it may appear, their sense of weariness became less acute as they proceeded. Both had relapsed into silence, and they kept on one dogged, unchanging pace, for two hours, after quitting the ravine of Algaby. Once Titus proposed that they should take another rest, but this Jack would not hear of; he knew, if they once sat down, what the difficulty would be in getting up again.

His prediction about the snow turned out correct; for, when, about three in the morning, they reached the village of Simplon, nearly at the summit of the pass, it was lying some inches in depth upon the ground. Poor Titus, whom Jack had plied with brandy as the only means of getting him on, until, under other circumstances, he would have been very intoxicated, could hardly

drag one leg before the other ; and, but for Jack's earnest lecture upon the impolicy of knocking up a post-house at that hour so unlikely to be chosen for legitimate travellers, he would have alarmed all the inmates of the hotel. Jack was scarcely less distressed than Ledbury, but his frame was stronger built to bear up against it ; besides, he knew that if he gave way it would be quite up with his friend.

It began to snow very heavily as they left Simplon, and continued to do so for upwards of an hour, until the first dull grey of morning appeared, slowly breaking over the waste before them. As the increasing light showed the dreary expanse which they had yet to traverse, the remnants of Ledbury's courage entirely forsook him, and, sinking down upon a square block of granite at the side of the road, he gasped out,

" It is of no use, Jack ; I can go no further, if I die for it."

In vain Johnson attempted to rouse him : he was fairly " dead beat" with cold and fatigue, and had not an atom of further exertion left.

" But what are we to do, Titus ?" asked Jack. " We cannot remain here."

" Oh ! yes we can," replied Ledbury, faintly. " I can, at least ; and you go on. I shall go to sleep."

And, putting his knapsack on the ground, he threw himself down upon the snow.



“ For Heaven’s sake, do not shut your eyes ! ” cried Jack, in alarm. “ If you do, you will never open them again. Titus, do you hear me ? You must be mad to think of going to sleep.”

“ Oh ! leave me alone ! pray let me go to sleep, only for five minutes,” said Titus ; “ and then I can go on again.”

“ No, no ! ” cried Johnson, shaking him violently. “ I tell you it is death to do so ! What must be done ? ”

He looked round in despair ; but nothing but barren rocks met his view. They were nearly seven thousand feet above the level of the sea.

But, just as he was about making a last strenuous effort to rouse Titus once more, the deep bay of a dog sounded in the quietude, and immediately afterwards a fine mastiff came round the angle of the road, and bounded towards them. Jack recognized the animal directly—it was a dog of St. Bernard, and was now at his side, barking at him as if in great wrath, but the next instant licking his hand.

Scarcely another minute elapsed before two figures followed in the path which the dog had made through the snow. One was evidently a monk, but the other had the air of a traveller ; and they both hastened towards our friends as Jack beckoned them. But the mutual surprise of recognition may be very well imagined when Mr. Crinks and Jack Johnson met each other’s gaze !

“ Mes étoiles et jarretières ! ” said Mr. Crinks ; “ here ’s a go ! Why, what on earth brought you here ! ”

“ I ’ll tell you all, directly,” returned Jack : “ but first look to Ledbury. Where can we take him ? ”

“ Close at hand,” said Mr. Crinks. “ The Simplon convent. I ’ve been staying there a week ; jolly cocks ! This is Father Maurice, whom I was going with to early mass at Simplon. I like to see all I can, you know, for money.”

“ What a providential chance to find you here ! ” exclaimed Johnson.

“ Isn’t it ? ” replied his vivacious acquaintance. “ I came over the Gemmi to Brieg, and here I am. But we can talk about all that presently.”

The good monk, who had acknowledged the hurried introduction of Mr. Crinks with mild courtesy, was now endeavouring to get poor Titus upon his legs ; whilst the dog, whom he called “ *Turc*,” as if pleased to find the traveller in the hands of his master, was rolling about on the ground, revelling in the snow, which he threw about him in all directions.

“ Here, give me the knapsacks,” said Mr. Crinks, taking up both of them, and slinging one over each shoulder. “ What the deuce have you been about to have tired yourselves already, at this unholy hour of the morning ? ”

“ A long story,” answered Jack ; “ but you

shall know it all by and by. First of all, where are we to go ?”

“ Not two minutes’ walk : the convent is just round the bend of the road. You would have seen it if you had kept up your courage a little longer.”

The monk, who was, as Crinks had observed, on his way to the village of Simplon, now apologized for proceeding ; but begged them to return to the convent directly, which is a branch of the far-famed establishment on the great St. Bernard. And then, with dog leaping and barking before him, he went on his way.

“ Now, steady,” observed Mr. Crinks, as Ledbury at last rose. “ Keep all right upon your pins, and lean on me. We shall be all safe directly.”

Nearly hanging upon their shoulders, Mr. Ledbury staggered down the road until they reached the convent. Two or three dogs bounded out to meet them ; and upon being conducted by one of the brethren to the large room, where a fire was blazing on the hearth, Mr. Ledbury fainted outright, whilst Jack threw himself at full length on the floor, and in three minutes fell fast asleep.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A FETE AT PARIS.—MR. LEDBURY'S LAST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC.

UNDER the care of the hospitable inmates of the convent, and the assurance that all danger was over, now that they had passed the frontier, Mr. Ledbury soon recovered. But they were both so fatigued with their exertions that they agreed to remain one more day in the building, and then once again start off together ; for Mr. Crinks was to accompany them all the way to England. And, in spite of the isolated situation of the establishment, there was a great deal to amuse them, more especially on the evening of their arrival, when the whole of the passengers from the Milan and Geneva *malle-poste* sought refuge at the convent, in consequence of the mail being immovably fixed in a snow-drift close at hand.

“ We hear strange stories of your dogs in England,” observed Johnson to the Prior, as they were gazing from the window over the snowy waste before them, where two or three of these

fine animals were playing with one another, or barking harmlessly at occasional travellers.

“ So I have been informed,” replied the father; “ I fear they give us credit for a great deal more than we accomplish.”

“ We have a picture at Islington,” said Mr. Ledbury, “ of a dog knocking at a door, with a child on his back, and a brandy-bottle round his neck. Did that ever happen, monsieur ?”

“ Never that I am aware of,” replied the Prior, smiling. “ Their chief use is to track out the mountain paths by their fine scent, when the snow is so deep that we cannot tell the road from the precipice. They go before us, and would, of course, discover the body of any unhappy traveller before we should ; but I believe this is their most important employment.”

“ Then they do not carry little children on their backs ?” said Mr. Ledbury in a tone of disappointment.

“ Oh, no,” said the Prior. “ I doubt not but if they found one in their rambles they would let us know by their uneasiness on their return that something was amiss, and then guide us to the spot ; but this would be all.”

“ Travelling certainly expands the mind,” said Mr. Ledbury, “ but destroys many pleasant illusions.”

“ To be sure it does !” remarked Jack. “ And, if people who write books would only put down

the plain truth, instead of copying what they have read before, or allowing their romantic feelings to run away with them, what a good service they would render to persons about to travel."

The next morning, after a substantial breakfast, they contributed a few francs, consistent with their finances, to the *tronc* of the convent chapel,—for the monks make no direct charge for their hospitality,—and then left the building in company.

They had a lively journey down to Brieg, although the snow was deep enough to make their progress a matter of no trifling exertion. But the sun shone brightly to cheer them, as the snow sparkled in his beams; whilst the clear, sharp mountain air braced up their limbs for double energy, and sent their blood circling through their veins with such vivid impetus that they laughed and shouted for very overflow of animal spirits, until the huge rocks and gorges rang again with their merriment. And when the road, at any steep declivity, assumed a zigzag course, to lessen the descent, Mr. Crinks always proposed that they should glide down the intervening slope to save time, and cut off the turning. And in these undertakings Mr. Ledbury greatly distinguished himself, generally shooting off at a much more rapid rate than the others, and going considerably beyond the goal, never stopping until he finally disappeared altogether in a snow-

drift, where he remained until rescued by the ice-poles of his companions.

They arrived at Geneva in two days from quitting the Simplon, where they were compelled to wait a short time, until they procured some passports from Berne, by means of some extraordinary representation to the consul, which Jack Johnson invented. And then these three, taking the *banquette* of the diligence to themselves, crossed the Jura, and passing through Dijon and Troyes, finally, after an uninteresting and continuous journey of eighty hours, found themselves once more in the courtyard of the *Messageries Générales*, Rue St. Honoré, No. 130. Mr. Crinks, who had formerly inhabited a cock-loft *suite* of cupboards at the top of a cheap hotel in the Rue Croix des Petits Champs, suggested that they should go there. But Jack and Ledbury inclined to their old neighbourhood, and calling a *citadine*, they all drove off with their luggage towards the scene of their first revelries—the Quartier Latin.

There was something very natural in finding themselves together again in Paris; and the old, dirty, narrow streets, after they crossed the Pont Neuf, possessed far greater attractions in their eyes than the flaunting Rue de Rivoli and Chausée d'Antin.

“There’s a *grisette*, Jack!” cried Ledbury, as he caught sight of a little figure, *très gentille*,

picking her way over the muddy stones of the Rue de Seine.

“And there’s a student,” replied Johnson, looking towards a gentleman in a bright scarlet cap, mustachios, and puckered-in grey pantaloons, who was smoking at the corner of the Rue de l’Ecole de Médecine. “And there’s the old pipe-shop, and M. Constant, with his ‘*déjeûners à six sous*,’ just the same as ever : and there’s the bill of a fête somewhere to-morrow. Hurrah ! perhaps we won’t be there !”

On arriving at their old lodgings in the Rue St. Jacques they found that the house was entirely occupied ; so that, as they only intended to stop a day or two in Paris, Jack proposed that they should go to an hotel. His recommendations were always acquiesced in ; and as he made sure that the flight of his former friend was all forgotten, he named the Hôtel Corneille for their temporary abode.

The Hôtel Corneille, at the side of the Odeon Theatre, is the chief establishment of its kind in Paris—the Clarendon of the Quartier Latin,—devoted to the nourishing and shelter of nearly an hundred students of law and medicine, who therein “follow their courses.” These consist of various studies, in accordance with the taste of the pupil, music being generally predominant ; for it is seldom that the Hôtel Corneille does not contain a band of twelve French



horns, who play concerted pieces at the open windows overlooking the Odeon colonnades with remarkable effect, and to the great diversion of the neighbours. Demonstrations, by learned professors, upon the various cannons and hazards required at billiards, take place daily in the *estaminet* attached to the establishment, to which no entrance-fee is required; lectures are delivered at least once a week to the inmates, upon social economy, by the prefect of police, before the student takes his degree of Bachelor of Grisettes; and frequent private classes are held for ethical discussions upon the influence of female society upon the habits of mankind in general. Its influence upon the habits of the *étudiants* in the Hôtel Corneille, is, generally causing their disposal, in times of pressing necessity, such as the carnival, or close of the session, to the first dealer in second-hand apparel who may chance to visit the district. And this brings us to certain other great advantages which the Hôtel Corneille enjoys over similar houses, but which you must reside there to become acquainted with.

Our travellers soon procured rooms for the two or three final days of their journey; and then, as they had not much further to go, comparatively, before reaching home, Jack and Ledbury laid in fresh suits of clothes from the Palais Royal. Nothing, however, would induce Mr. Crinks to purchase anything French, especially garments, “for

fear," as he expressed himself, "of being mistaken for some humbug foreigner when he got to England;" and so he paraded about just the same, in his check trousers and ankle-shoes, to the great admiration of the populace.

There was a fête the next evening outside one of the barriers; and as it was about the last one of the season, Jack and Ledbury determined to go, prevailing upon their friend, not without some difficulty, to accompany them, Mr. Crinks feeling more inclined to stay behind, and knock the shine out of various bearded students at billiards. Two or three of the inmates of the hotel, with whom Jack had already scraped up an acquaintance, proposed to join them; and entrapping a few grisettes on their way, who were apparently bound in the same direction, they made up a very lively party. For society discards its suit of buckram in those classic regions: and a previous acquaintance of the slightest description gives you full liberty to accost the pretty owner of any trim pair of feet that may be preceding you, picking their way from the summit of one paving-stone to another along the muddy streets of the Quartier Latin. Provided always, of course, that your addresses are in the strictest school of propriety and politeness; for the grisettes of Paris are particular. The fête was, as we have stated, outside one of the barriers, and the whole party went merrily down the *faubourg* leading thereto, until they

arrived at the scene of its gaieties. It was a mild, bright afternoon—a sort of last appearance of autumn, giving an attractive representation for its farewell benefit; all the company were cheerful and happy; and shows, games, and stalls were set up in all directions, novel in their character, and quite different to those of our fairs in England.

“Voyez, messieurs et dames, voyez,” cried a woman at the edge of the road, “quatre coups pour un sou?”

This informed customers that they might have four shots for a sou at a stand placed about five feet from the ground, on which were arranged various little images in plaster-of-paris; and at the top was a revolving piece of machinery, embellished with birds of the same material. The weapon of demolition was a cross-bow with a barrel, and the missile a pellet of clay; and, as nothing was gained from a successful aim beyond the honour of having taken it, the game might be considered as invented principally to gratify the organ of destructiveness. Mr. Crinks immediately entered the lists, and after finding out which way the bias of the barrel inclined, to delude unwary marksmen, began to knock the parrots and giraffes about at such a fearful rate, that he would have broken not only all the objects, but even the proprietress, had she not demurred against a continuation of his achievements. Mr.

Ledbury was less successful: for, in his nervous anxiety to distinguish himself as a sporting character before the assembled spectators, he pulled the trigger before he had taken an aim, and shot a bystander in the face; which feat cost him a two-franc piece, in avoidance of threatened punishment, and stopped all further display on his part.

“ Oh he ! oh he ! messieurs, les oiseaux militaires ! ” shouted a man in front of a small show, sporting a cocked hat, and enormous feather, “ les oiseaux savans et le gr-r-r-r-r-rand escamoteur. Oh he ! ”

There was an awful representation in front of the show, of the magician engaged in cutting off the head of a fashionable gentleman, and presenting it in a plate to an elegant lady, surrounded by company of various nations expressing astonishment. This was sure to attract the grisettes, and so the whole party waited in front of the exhibition, as the man continued,

“ Entrez, messieurs et dames. Ce n'est point une vile et honteuse spéculation : non ! loin de vous cette idée ! Le prix des places est trois sous, mais c'est seulement pour la nourriture de la ménagerie ! Allez, Fanfan—la trompette ! ”

A terrific blast upon an instrument boasting various solutions of continuity followed the command. When it was over, the showman shouted forth again, perceiving the party of our friends :—

“Entrez, messieurs les étudiants avec vos dames adorables : entrez, foulez-vous, pénétrez tumultueusement dans ce local ! Etouffez-vous, cassez-vous bras et jambes, mais entrez toujours ! Allez, encore la trompette et la gr-r-r-r-osse caisse !”

This eloquence was not to be withstood, and, as Mr. Crinks insisted upon paying for the whole party, in return for their agreeable society, the whole party took the hint, and entered the show, choosing their places upon the rough planks that formed its benches. Their example was followed by others, and the pavilion soon filled, when the exhibition of the “oiseaux savans” commenced.

Up to this period, the poor objects had been all asleep in a cage ; but, on being awakened, they presented a ragged assemblage of little featherless bullfinches, in cocked hats and small red coats, with miniature swords and guns tied round them. They drew carts, marched, deserted, fired cannon, and sat down to dinner ; and, when they had finished, walked very gravely into their cage again, where they directly fell asleep, except one of restless idiosyncrasy, who was forthwith brought out and lectured by his master, who addressed him as “ Mon petit jeune homme.” But it did not appear to have much effect, as, upon being released from a gun-carriage upon which he was placed, he made a desperate charge at one of the candles lighted for the purpose of firing the cannon, and directly extinguished it : for which act

of insubordination he was placed in solitary confinement in an old tea-caddy.

Next there was some conjuring, at which the girls screamed with delight, especially when a rabbit was produced from Mr. Ledbury's hat; and finally, the magician declared his readiness to cut off the head of anybody in the company, and replace it in five minutes. But for some time nobody seemed inclined to advance upon the platform, and accept the invitation.

"Now 's your time, Leddy," said Jack to his friend. "Go up yourself, and find out the trick. He will have rather a difficulty to take you in."

This compliment to his perception was quite enough to persuade him; and Mr. Ledbury stepped over the benches to the side of the conjuror, amidst the applause of the audience, to whom he bowed after a very distinguished fashion.

The conjuror, having pronounced his neck admirably adapted for the amputation, proceeded to array Mr. Ledbury in a long blouse, which he called *la dernière chemise d'un condamné*; and then sharpened a long knife on the floor, in the manner of clowns who put keen extempore edges upon pantomime razors. A curtain was next drawn down in front of the table upon which the decapitation was to take place,—most probably to save the feelings of the spectators; and everything was for a time veiled from their view. But during the interval they heard dreadful moans,





J. Leach



and a harsh sawing noise, as if the cartilages of Mr. Ledbury's neck were exceedingly difficult to be cut through, which somewhat excited the fears of the grisettes, and brought about a state of mind proper for the *dénouement*.

When the curtain was raised, an impressive sight presented itself. In the centre of the table, on a round trencher, was certainly Mr. Ledbury's head, with the hat and spectacles as usual, looking very appalling. His body was apparently lying some little distance from it, being occasionally convulsed, in the manner of Mr. Punch before his medical attendant comes to his relief. After the first thrill of horror, the applause was tremendous, as well as the laughter, increased when the magician exclaimed,

“Messieurs et dames—la tête va chanter. Allons—tête ! chantez, donc !”

And Mr. Ledbury's head thereupon began to sing, in nervous accents, his favourite ballad, “She wore a wreath of roses,” which had been long ago pronounced at merry Islington to be his *chef-d'œuvre*. When he had concluded, Jack Johnson requested the magician to pass the head and plate round amongst the audience, that they might be assured of its reality.

The magician replied that it was too heavy to move, which assertion was considered a joke, and produced a general laugh.

“Fiddlededee !” cried Mr. Crinks, getting up

from his seat. "See me lift it up. I can carry it, I'll be bound."

He advanced to the table, when, to the great surprise of every one, the plate and head rose quickly up, carrying the green cloth along with it like a pyramid, of which it formed the apex, shooting all the necromantic paraphernalia off upon the floor, and putting the body to great apparent inconvenience, whilst the lips exclaimed in vernacular idiom,

"Come, Crinks,—no larks!"

"Qu'est ce qu'il dit?" asked one of the grissettes, observing Johnson's glee, of her companion, who understood a little English.

"Qu'il n'a point des alouettes," replied the student. "Je ne le comprends pas précisément."

There was immediately a terrible misunderstanding between Mr. Ledbury and the magician, and the curtain was lowered with inconceivable rapidity; after which voices were heard in animated dispute behind it; and finally Mr. Ledbury emerged once more entire, with some precipitation, from the penetralia, requesting Jack to lend him five francs. And, when this second compromise had been effected, the audience dispersed, highly delighted with the unrehearsed effects of the exhibition. And then Mr. Ledbury, when his self-possession returned, let Jack Johnson into the secret of the deception, which is always a favourite one at the minor French

shows. Two persons are required to perform it, and the table closes round their necks like a pair of stocks, according to diagrams in various conjuring books still extant.

As evening was approaching they now turned towards the "Bal de Paris," which was gradually being illuminated by handsome lamps suspended all round it. Like most of the temporary ball-rooms at the fêtes of Paris, it was an enormous tent, supported by gilt pillars, and surrounded by trophies and tri-coloured flags, with festoons of red, blue, and white calico. The floor was neatly boarded, and in the centre an excellent orchestra, of a dozen musicians, was performing all the most popular waltzes and quadrilles,—an extra charge of five sous above the admission being made for every dance—the gentlemen only paying.

There were enough in our friends' party to form a snug little quadrille by themselves, Mr. Crinks not caring much to dance, but preferring a seat at the end of the tent, where he was allowed to smoke a cigar, and look after the respective properties of his party. But the others danced all the evening: they never needed the "*Aux places!*" of the master of the ceremonies, nor his urgent appeals for "*Un vis-à-vis!*" to make up their quadrille. And when the cornet pealed out the inspiring notes of "*La Fille du Regiment,*" Jack went off with his partner in a style that even the Chaumière, and its presiding genius, "Le

Père Lahire," would have been proud of. It was his last visit to Paris,—at least, in all probability, until his dancing days were over,—and he resolved to make the most of it. And Mr. Ledbury, too, was talking French to his partner—a pretty "brocheuse," in a dark *mousseline-de-laine*—with a fluency of perfection that only the influence of a bottle of outside-the-barrier vin ordinaire, at fifteen sous, could have accomplished; whilst the students kept up a perpetual skirmish with the municipal guard respecting the regulations of their method of dancing "*plus ou moins cancan*," which only increased the excitement.

There was a merry supper afterwards, principally composed of grapes and Rheims biscuits, with wine for the gentlemen, and *fleur d'orange* for their fair companions. And then they trudged joyfully homewards together, all abreast, arm-in-arm, until they occupied the entire road, singing the old Quartier Latin chorus, "Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup!" and buying more *sucré d'orge* and *galette* upon their journey than would have sufficed for a month's ordinary consumption.

At the barrier they took possession of one of the Dames Blanches omnibuses, which they nearly filled with their party, being finally deposited at the principal entrance of the Hôtel Cornaille, just as the first band of the northern divi-

sion of holiday-keepers was returning from the *guingettes* of the Barrière du Mont Parnasse.

Nor was the festivity then finished; for a fresh banquet was ordered in Mr. Ledbury's room, at which the mirth was so prolonged, that the proprietor, finding all his efforts to disperse the guests perfectly ineffectual, locked up the great gates in despair, and left the whole assembly to that benignant destiny which especially watches over the students of law and medicine in the Quartier Latin of the good city of Paris.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE DEATH OF EDWARD MORRIS.

FROM the thoughtless revelry of the Hôtel Corneille, and the unalloyed gaiety of its inmates, we will once more change the action of our story to the dreary precincts of "The Brill," at Somers Town.

It was a cold and cheerless evening. Few persons were about in the lonely precincts of Stevens' Rents, and the wind was howling along the canal, and over the broken ground and unfinished foundations along its banks, threatening at each gust to extinguish the few dismal lamps, which vainly strove to throw their rays over the gloomy tract of ground intervening between them. It was late, too—an hour after midnight; and the lights in the adjacent tenements had been some time extinguished, except at one of the windows in the detached clump of miserable abodes, of which the beer-shop formed the chief portion. And here a candle was burning close to the casement, as if intended for a beacon to guide some expected visitors across the ground to the building.

In the billiard-room adjoining the bar, Mathews, the nominal proprietor of the house, together with Edward Morris, were seated before a fire, composed of huge pieces of coal taken from the barges on the canal. Nobody besides these two was in the room; but occasionally a foot-step over-head, or the thick, heavy breathing of those in the adjoining apartments, gave token that most probably the remainder of the party were beneath the roof.

“Twenty minutes past one,” said Morris, as he cast his eyes towards a watch. “She could have been back two hours ago, giving her even double time for the journey. I can’t think what can have detained her.”

“Nothing amiss, I hope,” returned Mathews, knocking the remaining ashes from his pipe upon the stove, and giving a prolonged yawn. “I shan’t sit up much longer, I can tell you. What do you think about it?”

“We had some words before she left,” replied Morris. “She has done nothing but quarrel lately. I don’t think she would—no—she cares too much for me.”

“What, split?” observed Mathews. “What good would that do? She knows we must all go together when we are caught. I don’t suppose the game can last much longer. The smashing has had its day, and all other money is running very short.”

“ If this new pigeon will bleed well that we expect, we can carry on a short time,” returned Morris. “ Look here.”

And, advancing to the billiard-table, he lifted up the cloth, and showed Mathews the wood scraped away at one or two of the pockets, with an inclination that would draw any ball into them, once within the range.

“ He won’t know of this,” said Morris: “ I shall: and, even if he does play better, I shall beat him. I shall practise for an hour or so still, to see how the plan works.”

“ You had better go to bed,” observed Mathews gruffly. “ You look like a corpse now.”

“ No—I shall not go until Letty returns. I am somewhat annoyed at her absence. I should not sleep if I did.”

“ Well, I don’t see the use of my sitting up, just for the sake of doing so,” continued the other. “ You can give me a shake when she comes back, and let me know all about it. Good night, for the present.”

As he spoke he rose from the fire-place, and turned into the bar, his accustomed sleeping apartment. Here he threw himself on the remnant of a sofa, covered with canvass and old sack-ing, and in a few minutes his heavy snoring proclaimed him to be asleep. Morris now went to the door, and opening it, walked out a few paces from the house, peering through the darkness, as



if to discover whether there were any tokens of the arrival of his expected messenger ; but all was desolate and obscure, and he returned into the room, closing the door after him, and shivering with the cold as he approached the fire. But the momentary chill brought on a violent fit of coughing, so prolonged and exhausting in its attack upon his debilitated frame, that he threw himself upon the ground before the fire-place, and remained so for at least a quarter of an hour after the paroxysm had concluded.

At length he rose, and, taking one of the cues which were lying scattered about the room, commenced trying his skill with the billiard-balls, placing them in every variety of position that could prove the effect of the alterations he had made in the bed of the table, and rehearsing those mechanical tricks of the game, in which the questionable *chevaliers d'industrie*, who frequent the public rooms of the metropolis, are such fine proficient. The time wore on, and still Letty did not return ; yet Morris kept playing with unwearied perseverance, calculating every chance and hazard of the table with the keenest care. Frequently, when Mathews woke from his fitful sleep, in the course of the night, he heard the click of the balls knocking against one another in the adjoining apartment. But at last all was quiet ; and then the worthy host, imagining that Morris was worn out with his exertions, or that

Letty had returned, and all was securely shut up for the night, troubled himself no further, but turned round upon his rough coach, and once more sunk into a deep slumber.

The first grey gleam of daybreak was stealing through the apertures of the shutters that closed the bar-windows, when the landlord was aroused by a loud knocking at the door, coupled with the voices and footsteps of several persons outside. There was a determination in the summons very different to the stealthy signal of the usual frequenters of the house, when they wished to gain admission; and he was for a moment undecided how to act, when a renewed clamour, coupled with the intimation that the door would be broken in by authority unless it was directly opened, convinced him that the patience of the visitors was not to be trifled with. Groping his way to the door in the dim obscurity, he found that it was merely closed by the latch, none of the usual bars or chains being put across it, which proved that the girl had not returned. As he opened it, shading the cold morning light with his hand from his half-closed eyes, he saw that a large party of the police were standing round it, accompanied at a timid distance by a few early idlers of "The Brill," who had followed them from mere curiosity.

"You have some one named Morris living

here," said the constable to Mathews, before he had well recovered himself from the surprise caused by his unexpected visitors.

"No, no," he replied, hastily assuming an apparent unconcern; "there is nobody of that name here, as I know of."

"Well, we will satisfy ourselves," returned the other, as he entered the passage. "Perhaps he is here, and you don't know it, so that we had better look."

"I'm sure I can't tell," observed Mathews carelessly. "I'm only a lodger. There may or may not be. Good morning, gents."

"I must trouble you to keep along with us," said the policeman, "if it is only to show us the way."

And, at a sign, two of the party placed themselves on either side of the landlord, who now began to perceive that things were taking a somewhat serious turn as regarded himself.

They advanced along the short passage before the bar, one of the force remaining at the door to keep back the followers who now clustered round it, and entered the billiard-room. It was here nearly dark, for the lamp on the chimney-piece was on the point of going out, its glimmering and expiring flame being scarcely sufficient to cast a light above a few inches from where it was placed.

“We must have some more light,” said the sergeant. “Open the shutters there, one of you.”

A man advanced to the window, and pulled down the strong square board that was placed against it. The light streamed through the casement, and an involuntary exclamation of surprise and horror burst from the party, as it fell upon the billiard-table deluged with blood, and the body of Edward Morris, cold and dead, hanging over the cushions, the feet scarcely touching the ground, and reclining on its face in the midst of the hideous pool, whilst one of the hands still grasped a billiard-cue.

“He has made away with himself,” exclaimed one or two voices.

“He has been murdered !” cried others, at the same time.

The inspector approached the body, and, with an apathy only acquired by constant intimacy with similar scenes, raised the head by its hair from the table, and endeavoured to ascertain the cause of death. But there was none visible, although the crimson stream had apparently welled entirely away from its tenement; for the body was perfectly blanched from the loss, but still retaining its flexibility. He had ruptured a vessel in the lungs whilst leaning over the cushion, and thus died upon the table.

“This may prove an awkward business for





*The Lost Hazard.*

you," said the constable to the proprietor. "You must go back with us, as well as everybody in the house. How many have you got here?"

"I don't know," replied Mathews, in a surly tone. "I have told you that I know nothing about it. They only sleep here: if you want them, you had better look for them yourself."

"I intend to," returned the other.

And he prepared to despatch one of his fellows to the nearest station for additional help; whilst a couple of those remaining were ordered to post themselves outside the house.

But, whilst the officer was giving these directions a fresh tumult was heard at the door. Above the murmur of several voices in contention, a female's was distinctly audible in accents of earnest supplication and distress; and, before the cause could be ascertained, a young girl burst into the room. She was but half-dressed, and partially enveloped in a coarse whittle shawl thrown carelessly over her head and shoulders; but her face was so pale and haggard, that in the absence of speech and motion she might have formed a fitting consort for the dreary corpse on the table before them. She cast one wild and hurried glance, with the restless vision of a maniac, from one to the other of the assembled party; and then her eye finally rested upon the body of Edward Morris. For an instant she appeared to mistrust the reality of the fearful ob-

ject. She advanced towards it, and then, shrinking away with terror, fell shuddering back, as a subdued cry of agony burst from her parted lips—an intense but stifled exclamation of fearful despair, as if a breaking heart was choking the utterance of the deepest and most poignant anguish. One of the bystanders caught her in his arms as she was falling to the ground, and placing her upon one of the rough settles in front of the fireplace, attempted to offer a few words of commonplace conversation. But she heeded them not; to all appearance she was as unconscious of aught about her as her late associate.

It was, indeed, the unfortunate companion of Edward Morris, whose attempted suicide on the preceding night we have already spoken of. She had been carried to bed by the people of the house to which she had been first taken; and her clothes placed in her room at her own request, before she fell into a feverish sleep; the result of exhaustion from the trying ordeal she had undergone. But the slumber was of short duration; and upon awaking, as soon as her ideas were sufficiently collected, she sought for the letter, which she remembered was in her pocket, and found that it was gone. From the unguarded answers of the servant of the tavern, who came up occasionally to look after their patient, she learned that the police appeared on the point of starting upon some expedition to which they had



but just obtained a cue : and this intelligence, heedlessly given, determined her how to act. In the absence of the woman she attired herself as hastily as her enfeebled powers of exertion would permit, and slipping quietly down stairs, left the house at daybreak. The morning air came cold and death-like to her shattered frame ; and the few individuals who were moving at that early hour regarded her with some slight feelings of suspicion, as her haggard apparition crossed their path ; but she heeded them not, her only object being to arrive at the Brill, and warn Morris of his danger. When she got into the wretched neighbourhood in the precincts of Stevens' Rents, she was regarded with less mistrust, for misery was the prevailing character of the locality and its inmates ; a ruddy face and buoyant step would have excited more surprise than the pale features and cowering progress of the unhappy girl. As she approached the house which Morris inhabited, she saw a few persons round the door ; and on arriving at the threshold, was, at first, refused admittance by the constable ; until the man relented, partly shaken in his determination by the taunts of the bystanders, who are ever ready to take part against the authorities. The rest the reader is acquainted with.

It was not long before the reinforcements of police arrived, and the whole of the gang found in the house were taken into custody. They

made no attempts at resistance. The persons of the majority were so well known to the police that their escape would have been speedily followed by a recapture in another direction. And then the house was closed, two of the force remaining to guard it, until the inquest had terminated, and the body might be removed.

The unhappy girl was taken to the St. Pancras workhouse, still insensible. Fever rapidly supervened upon the previous prostration and sudden shock her frame had experienced. The reaction increased beyond the power of medical assistance to control it ; and in three days she was no less free from further peril and anguish than her late hapless associate. Then came a pauper funeral ; the plain elm coffin, and the transient monument of carelessly heaped-up mould, which was soon shuffled down level with the ground, until there remained no trace to mark the grave of the single atom in the vast body of London misery that was mouldering below.

## CHAPTER XX.

MR. LEDBURY AND JACK JOHNSON ONCE MORE RETURN HOME.

A VERY short time elapsed after the fête, before Jack and Ledbury packed up their treasures to return home, having agreed to go back by Rouen and Havre, to the great delight of Titus. For, he anticipated much pleasure in getting romantic about Joan of Arc and Robert the Devil; and also calculated that a knowledge of the country would enable him to throw additional force, when he got once more to Islington, into the air, "*Quand je quittais la Normandie,*" which might serve to represent the night when he left Havre, and which he had an idea would be very effective on the flute. Mr. Crinks also was of the party, for he likewise began to think it was time to return, being the acting head of some city establishment located in Mincing Lane, which would have excited much ingenious speculation in deep thinkers as to how money could be made in such a dingy, unpresuming set of chambers as he occupied. But in the city, dirt and gold are always intimately connected; as if the precious metal still retained

a hankering affection for the earth it sprung from. And alchemy is therein studied with wondrous success, transmuting all things into wealth, no longer in underground laboratories and secret chambers, but in the peopled thoroughfares, and on the broad and sparkling river.

They steamed with tolerable speed down the Seine, which at some parts may be termed a miniature Rhine, from the beauty of its scenery ; and only stopping at Havre a few hours, crossed the same evening, to Southampton. And then the railway deposited them at Vauxhall in perfect safety, when the trio separated, not without some feelings of regret, Mr. Crinks availing himself of the services of the Lightning to convey him to London Bridge, after being made the subject of a serious trial of muscular power between the respective partisans of the iron and wooden companies. Jack Johnson avowed his intention of invading the establishment of Mr. Prodgers, and procuring a bed for a night or two in his old quarters, until he could look about him ; and Mr. Ledbury proceeded at once to his family mansion at Islington.

The delight of Mr. Prodgers at seeing his old friend was unbounded ; and Jack was no less pleased at inspecting the different arrangements of his late fellow-apprentice, which he did with great interest from one end of the surgery to the other, as soon as an extempore meal was finished,

and the first burst of conversation had subsided, and then he took his place behind the day-book as naturally as if he had never been away, and as if Mr. Rawkins was still his guide and preceptor.

“And how are you getting on, Percy?” asked Jack.

“Well, I ought not grumble,” returned Prodders, “Those pills have been a great hit,” he added, pointing to the pyramid of Vitality. “I have added a treatise on indigestion, and a list of cures, to their other attractions.”

“Ah! I see,” observed Jack, as he read reports of several cases coming from Cardiff, Bolton, York, Norwich, and Exeter. “What a very extensive practice you must have, eh, Percy?”

“Remarkably so,” returned the other, directing Jack’s attention to some chimerical object, by pointing with his thumb over his left glenoid articulation of the humerus. “But it is nothing to my imagination. Do you know, I invented all those cures myself, except that one of the cobbler, who had been given up by all the hospitals.”

“And, how did you cure him?”

“I gave him a pair of strong walking-shoes.”

“What!—to take?”

“No, to make. I told him what I wanted; and he promised to have every illness I wished in return for my patronage. New footing a pair of boots induced a hitherto incurable asthma; pay-

ing him ready money for them made him paralytic since his birth ; a pair of hob-nailed high-lows for my cad-boy drew him into a confession, that he had been led by a friend to try ‘ Prodgers’s Pill of Vitality ;’ and the final order of the strong walking-shoes eliciting an avowal, that I was at liberty to make what use I pleased of the communication. Don’t you see?”

“ Perfectly,” replied Johnson, laughing ; “ and who are your agents at Cardiff, and the other places, who take such interest in your discovery ?”

“ Ah, now you puzzle me,” returned Prodgers. “ I looked out for the names in an old London directory, and then appointed them to different country agencies myself. I established one in Philadelphia last night, who wrote back this morning, begging that I would have the goodness to forward him two hundred boxes ; as his first consignment was exhausted.”

“ You’ll do, Percy,” said Johnson, looking with complacency at his friend, whom he had never before given credit to for such sound medical knowledge. “ Only take care they do not produce any ill effects.”

“ They are perfectly harmless,” answered Prodgers ; “ equal parts of bread and soap, rolled in liquorice-powder. They are very useful to emigrants, because, upon emergency they would do to shave with ; and may be given to infants with impunity.”

“That is a great point,” observed Jack.

“It is everything. I always leave everything to Nature. You may depend upon it she knows a great deal more about our constitutions than we do.”

The establishment of Mr. Prodgers was closed that afternoon at an early hour, and the remainder of the evening was spent in conversation upon past occurrences, and the discussion of future prospects on either side. Fortunately, no case required the attendance of the young practitioner, and so he sat with his guest over the fire of the old back parlour, comparing positions, and laying out plans, until the last pipe of *tabac de regie* was exhausted, when they both retired to rest.

Early the next morning Jack collected his testimonials, and started off for an interview with Mr. Howard's solicitor, having determined that he would not call at Ledbury's house until he had settled everything; and, feeling assured that Titus would lose no opportunity of smoothing the way for his reception. His visit was most satisfactory; and everything was arranged in a most pleasant manner to all parties; for Mr. Howard had already written to London, advising his lawyer of his intentions with regard to Johnson, and begging him to lose no time, upon that gentleman's return, in introducing him to the duties of his new office. And those were not very heavy; a daily attendance of from three to

five hours in the city, for transcribing and arranging certain documents, English and foreign, which at present had somewhat the appearance, to Jack, of hieroglyphics made difficult ; but which he was assured a little attention would enable him perfectly to understand and enter into.

This point being pleasantly arranged, Jack next bent his steps, with a throbbing heart and anxious expectancy, towards the city house of business of Mr. Ledbury senior. The old gentleman was engaged in his private room when Jack arrived, so he sat down to wait until he should be at leisure, one of the clerks — a presentable one, who had been present at the party at the beginning of the year — recollecting him, and politely handing him the morning paper. But Jack found it was of no use trying to fix his attention to it. He read the leader through and through four or five times, without having the slightest idea at the conclusion what it had been about, his eyes running over the state of Spain, and his mind only thinking of Emma Ledbury, until all the paragraphs, letters, and advertisements appeared to join in one wild dance of triumph at his confusion ; and shot about to all corners of the page at once, like motes in a sunbeam.

At last the visitor with whom Mr. Ledbury had been occupied took his leave ; and Jack was



ushered into the room, in the same state of mind as that of a prisoner when he is called up to receive judgment ; or a medical student as he follows the awful beadle of the Apothecaries' Company into the hall of inquisition, to undergo his examination. But he was somewhat reassured by the very polite and almost cordial manner in which the old gentleman received him, and requested him to be seated.

" I am glad to see you back in England, Mr. Johnson," said Mr. Ledbury ; " and am also exceedingly obliged to you for the attention which you showed to my commission. We must thank you, too, for looking after Titus : you appear to have brought him out of several scrapes, which his want of knowledge of the world led him into."

" I believe all the gratitude ought to be on my part, sir," replied Jack. " We had a delightful journey, and, to me, a highly fortunate one. I suppose Titus has mentioned to you something about it."

" I think he said something last night about an agency with which you had been entrusted by Mr. Howard. I was very happy to hear it," returned the old gentleman.

Jack thought Mr. Ledbury alluded to this circumstance very unconcernedly, considering what an important affair it was, and did not very well know how to proceed ; whilst Mr.

Ledbury, who had some very slight suspicion as to the motive of Jack's visit, waited for him to speak first concerning it. So that for a short time they were both silent; and it was not until Mr. Ledbury had poked the fire, and folded and arranged several perfectly unimportant letters upon the desk before him with great care, that Jack could summon up courage to speak. At last he made a bold plunge into the affair, and began,—

“I have come, sir, for the purpose of having a short interview with you respecting my attachment to your daughter. You will recollect, perhaps, that on one occasion before this we discussed this subject?”

“I remember it perfectly,” answered the old gentleman; “and I believe I then made you acquainted with my sentiments on that point, which you can possibly call to mind.”

“I ought to be able to do so, sir,” said Jack. “I have repeated them to myself, and commented upon them often enough lately.”

“But you have not since discovered anything unreasonable in what I then told you?” observed Mr. Ledbury.

“Neither since, nor at the time, sir. I think you then made the observation that you could not countenance my attentions to Miss Ledbury, unless I was possessed of an income sufficient to

support her in the same style of comfort she had been brought up to."

"I have no doubt those were my words. I will give you credit for having recollected them better than I could," returned Mr. Ledbury, half smiling.

"Well, sir," continued Jack, drawing additional courage from the expression of placidity that stole over the old gentleman's face, "I am happy to say that my prospects now enable me to make an offer for your daughter's hand. You were pleased to tell me some time ago that you had confidence in my honour. I hope that confidence has not been shaken?"

"Nothing on your part has led me ever to mistrust you, Mr. Johnson," answered the old gentleman; "but you must excuse me, if I ask you, what regular income your expectations lead you to expect?"

"I am to receive two hundred a-year," returned Jack; "at least that was the sum Mr. Howard offered me, to become his agent."

"And Mr. Howard's word is his bond: you will learn that, if you have not found it so already. But you will pardon me, Mr. Johnson: do you think that a sufficient income to marry upon?"

"Not by itself, sir, certainly," said Johnson. "But you will perhaps not dislike me the more

for being frank with you. I will confess I have not altogether been without hopes that, on your own part, you might feel inclined to advance some certain moderate sum, to be settled on your daughter, and entirely at her disposal. You must not think that I am actuated by any mercenary feelings on this point—it is for her sake alone that I should wish this.”

“You will never find me unreasonable or illiberal in my transactions,” observed the old gentleman; “but this is an affair that requires some little consideration. Besides, there is another inclination to be consulted—my daughter’s.”

“In the mean time, sir,” said Jack, “may I be permitted to call at your house?”

“Well—I see no very great objection to your so doing,” replied Mr. Ledbury; “and you may take this, if you please, as a proof of my trust in your good feeling. Will you dine with us on Thursday?”

There can be little doubt but that the invitation was speedily and most willingly accepted. Then, as other business required Mr. Ledbury’s attention, Jack took his leave, thanking him earnestly—if ever there was sincerity in the world—for the hopes he had thrown out, that all might finally be pleasantly arranged, however faintly shadowed forth those expectations were. And he lost no time in flying back to the house of Mr. Prodgers, where Titus was awaiting his re-

turn, in accordance with a previous arrangement, to whom he reported nearly every syllable of the interview.

“It’s all right, Jack,” said his friend; “I know the governor’s ways better than you do. He would not have asked you to our house, if he had not intended everything to turn out comfortably. You will be my brother-in-law, after all.”

“If you are about to marry,” observed Mr. Prodgers, with much importance, “allow me—”

And hereupon he presented Jack with his professional card in all due gravity, continuing,

“No connection with Mr. Koops. Individuals ushered into and out of the world in half the usual space of time, at the lowest possible scale of prices. Ask for the Pill of Vitality—there is a private box at your disposal.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH THE WISHES OF MOST PARTIES ARE ACCOMPLISHED.

It was not until some days after his arrival in England, and then by mere chance, that Jack became acquainted with the particulars of his cousin's death. When the catastrophe occurred, a policeman friendly to the Prodgers' interests had started off directly to give him notice of the event, even taking a cab on his own responsibility; and by this alacrity Mr. Prodgers arrived at "The Brill" before any other medical man, which procured his attendance at the inquest, and the accompanying guinea for his services. This important fee he had entered in large letters, and with great form, in his day-book; and thus Jack learnt what had happened, whilst looking over the different entries that marked the progress of his friend's professional career.

As he had never mentioned the connexion between Edward Morris and himself to any one, not even to Titus, he determined that it should still remain a secret; and accordingly he checked -

the exclamation of surprise which Mr. Prodgers' narrative of the occurrence brought to his lips. At first, however, he was much shocked at the wretched fate of his relative, although it would be wrong to deny that, when this had passed away, he did not feel a heavy weight taken from his mind by Edward's death; for the purely innocent manner in which he had become, in a measure, involved in his cousin's delinquencies, had ever since thrown a shadow across his path, even in his gayest moments.

His first care was to return the money committed to his care to the quarter from whence it had been purloined. He took it from his box, enveloped in the same old rag in which he had received it a twelvemonth back,—for his word had been kept with respect to its being sacred whilst in his possession,—and left it himself at the banking-house wherein Morris had been a clerk, accompanied by an anonymous note, briefly explaining the circumstances, and requesting an acknowledgment of its receipt in one of the daily journals. The advertisement appeared two days afterwards, and before long Jack felt happier than he had been for some time; insomuch, that Mr. Prodgers, who had caught a new patient, and was equally joyful, having proposed a celebration of the event, only anticipated Jack's intention. A note was sent off to Titus, who was delighted to join the party; and after this the trio waylaid

Mr. Tweak upon the Queen's highway, as he came from evening lecture, and carried him off in triumph to the heights of Clerkenwell. And then they passed a very merry evening, aided by a hot supper, and subsequent indulgence in spirituous liquors and tobacco, until they got so lively, that the old days of Rawkins and Hoppy appeared to be revived with all their original splendour and effect. And Mrs. Pim, next door, heard unwonted harmony in the middle of the night; the chink of wine-cups, and the lively measure of hornpipes danced upon the table amongst the pipes and tumblers, in emulation of cunning terpsichorean professors, amidst their new-laid eggs, until the tumblers vindicated their pretensions to their names by falling off upon the floor. All this, as may be expected, considerably disturbed Mrs. Pim's rest, although this was possibly less inconvenient to herself than it would have been to other old ladies, inasmuch as, from her own account, she had never slept a wink for forty years. But when Mr. Koops called to see her the next morning, she gave him a painful account of her sufferings during the night, which she described as if Chinese mandarins had been performing solos on the drums of her ears, and all her brains had turned into barrel-organs out of tune. Mr. Prodgers and his party, however, thought little about Mrs. Pim in their moments of conviviality; although they went so far as to



serenade her in the open air, when the hour arrived for them to part.

As soon as they were gone, Jack retired to bed, in spite of all his host's entreaties that he would stay up a little longer, leaving Mr. Prodgers to be convivial by himself, who refilled his glass, smoked another cigar, and then began to read all his printed lists of cures by the Pills of Vitality three or four times over, placing a box of those invaluable preparations upon an inverted tumbler before him, which from time to time he regarded with affectionate admiration. And from this circumstance, those who had minutely studied his idiosyncrasy might have offered a safe opinion upon the present state of his cerebral organs; for whenever Mr. Prodgers had imbibed more of the products of fermentation than was absolutely essential to allay thirst in a normal condition of his organization, he was wont to read his list of cures with untiring attention; or if he chanced to be from home, upon returning to his abode he would contemplate his name on the door, in wrapt ecstasy, sometimes for a quarter of an hour before entering. And then it was that his unfettered aspirations soared aloft, and he felt the exalted place which that name was destined some day to hold, although when, where, or by what means, were points which the glittering web of his futurity had not plainly revealed.

On the following Thursday, according to the in-

visitation of old Mr. Ledbury, Jack dined at his house. Nothing could be kinder than his reception by all the family ; and there seemed to be a tacit understanding amongst them that he was to sit by Emma at dinner. And when, after the ladies had quitted the table, he was left with Titus and his father, the old gentleman completed Jack's happiness by telling him " he saw nothing against his being allowed to pay his addresses to Emma, upon mature consideration ;" and also that he, Mr. Ledbury, had made such pecuniary concessions in her favour as he was assured Mr. Johnson would not be displeased with.

" And now, Mr. Johnson," said the old gentleman, " I suppose you and Emma understand each other's sentiments pretty well : let me suggest your union with all reasonable expedition."

" I desire nothing better, sir," was the reply.

" I'm glad of it," continued Mr. Ledbury. " I do not like to see young people rushing head over heels into precipitate marriages ; but, when everything appears tolerably straightforward, I am a great enemy to long engagements. Titus, get another bottle of claret."

Titus took the key from his father, and left the room.

" During the time you have been my son's companion," said Mr. Ledbury, as the door closed, " I believe he has had much to thank you for. He has gained a knowledge of men and manners, which may be of some service to him

in my establishment. I must confess, before he became acquainted with you, I was somewhat puzzled, from his simplicity, what to put him to."

"I can see myself an alteration in him, sir," replied Jack. "But, through it all, his sense of honour and good feeling have always remained the same."

"You are right; and Emma possesses all his best qualities, with a more extended judgment. She is a good girl, Mr. Johnson. My giving her to you is the best evidence of my confidence in your own integrity. Come — we will drink her health."

The tears stood in Jack's eyes as he filled his glass, and swallowed its contents very convulsively to hide his emotion. Titus returned directly afterwards with the claret, and some wonderful story pertaining to the economy of the cellar, which turned the conversation, and after a little while they all retired to the drawing-room.

It was the happiest evening that Jack ever passed in all his life. The old gentleman read "The Sun" with his usual attention; and Mrs. Ledbury was still deeply engaged in the fabrication of the knit worsted shawl, which had employed her, apparently, ever since the dark ages of fancy-work, when the light of Berlin wool was beginning to dawn upon the hitherto sober dominion of crewel, and, in point of imperceptible progress, was bidding fair to rival the suspension

bridge at Hungerford. Titus was, more than usual, fraternally affectionate, and was assisting his little brother Walter, before Foster came to put him to bed, in giving a grand banquet to nobody, from various extraordinary wooden viands, imported to Islington from the distant regions of the Lowther Arcade. And so Emma and Jack were left to entertain each other, and they did not appear to complain of being dull. Emma played the piano nearly all the evening, and Jack turned over the leaves for her, as he sat close by her side, talking "through the music," as they say in stage directions, when the heroines have to declaim, in moments of deep interest, to an orchestral accompaniment. Possibly a thorough musician would have discovered a want of unity, and an occasional too rapid transition from one style to another, in Emma's performance; but so much important conversation was passing between them all the while, that it was only remarkable how the young lady could play anything at all. And indeed at last Titus, with all his forbearance, solicited a new tune, reminding her that she had played the *Valse de Fascination* fifteen or sixteen times over from beginning to end, and recommending her to try something from Norma, by way of variety. But their series of concerted pieces only came to a conclusion upon the appearance of the supper-tray; and, when Jack finally took his leave, Emma chose to light him to the door her-

self,—a proceeding which occupied so much time, that it was evident some evil genius had hidden Jack's Chesterfield and hat in one place, and his stick and gloves in another, during his visit, or nothing would have detained his fair companion so long from the sitting-room.

At length, however, Emma returned, rubbing her taper fingers together, exclaiming it was very cold, and looking amazingly as if she thought so. And Jack was once more on his way home; but as he left the door, he could not help looking back upon his wretchedness the last time he quitted the house,—how dreary everything appeared to him,—how the very wind appeared to howl in insulting triumph at his misery, as it swept through the unfinished buildings of the street. And now, although the shells of the houses were just the same, and the wind was blowing, if anything, with double violence, yet its very anger suggested ideas of cheerfulness and comfort, as the thought of long happy evenings, and snug merry fire-sides, which would lose half their charms without the noise of the wind,—locked out for the night, like any other boisterous reveller,—to let folks know, by contrast, how contented they ought to feel. And in this pleasant mood he trudged home to Prodgers', and went to bed, finally dreaming that he could furnish a four-roomed house comfortably, a six-roomed ditto elegantly, and a ten-roomed ditto luxu-

riously, at ten shillings per room ; such being about the rate of prices his friend had adhered to when he entered upon the establishment of Pattle, surgeon and accoucheur, a fortnight with, and successor to, Mr. Rawkins.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST INDISCRETION OF JACK JOHNSON.

To make up for the spirit of inaction which had pervaded the world of Islington for some time past, the Grimleys and Mrs. Hoddle soon had enough to talk about, and engage their attention. For Miss Grimley had first heard from her dress-maker that a *trousseau* was in active preparation for Miss Ledbury, and forthwith carried the intelligence to Mrs. Hoddle at tea-time that same evening; expressing her great sorrow that poor Emma was going to marry that Mr. Johnson, after all, and hoping sincerely that everything would turn out for the best. By the medium of Mrs. Hoddle's general news-agency the important fact was soon promulgated in every corner of Islington, and the day was fixed, the arrangements determined upon, and the pecuniary affairs on either side definitively laid down by the settlers of the northern metropolitan colonies, long before the parties most interested had themselves any fixed ideas upon the subject. Jack passed all his spare time at the Ledburys', possi-

bly more than he ought strictly to have done, and even appeared on two consecutive Sundays in their pew at St. Mary's church, which considerably distracted the attention of the congregation from matters of deeper import, which fully proved the interest excited by the circumstance; for Islington may be considered, upon the whole, of the elect.

Three or four weeks passed from this period, during which time Jack Johnson was unceasingly employed in making all sorts of elaborate preparations for this change in his condition; and at last the important day arrived. At an early hour of the morning, as soon as breakfast was concluded, Mrs. Hoddle took up her position at the front window in a full-dress cap, that she might not lose any of the visible proceedings; and, at the same time, close observers might have discovered various heads of the Grimley family approximating as closely to the gauze blinds as prudence would permit, casting frequent glances towards the Ledbury's front-door, and being at last gratified by the arrival of two carriages, the closest approximation to private vehicles which the enterprize of Titus could procure. These drew up at the gate, and soon attracted a crowd of children, to beguile the time by swinging upon the chains, practising gymnastics on the rails, chasing one another round and under the carriages, or occasionally greeting Titus with a pro-



longed huzza, as his head nervously appeared at any of the windows.

The next arrival was a fly, which had come the whole way from the South-western Railway, containing Fanny Wilmer, who was to be one of the bridesmaids, and her brother, who had left Clump-ley that very day to be present at the solemnization, and who, being taken by the assembled children for the bride and bridegroom, were cheered vociferously until they entered the house. And Ledbury's page, who had all the morning resembled a human puppet in buttons, so active were his movements, having carried in all sorts of strange country-looking parcels, which spoke of fowls and cream, and came with the Wilmers, darted off at a frantic tangent up the street. He returned in a few minutes, leading back a fellow-page with a patronizing air, a small boy of spare habit, who, upon closer inspection by those who had known him formerly, turned out to be the original Bob that had shared the vicissitudes of the pigeons and guinea-pigs in the medico-zoological establishment of Mr. Rawkins. For Jack had discovered a clue to Bob's *locale*, subsequently to Mr. Pattle's break-up; and taking him from the workhouse, in which he had passed some months, caused him to be clad in a modern page's most approved costume, and appointed him his especial retainer. In the interim he had boarded with a staid woman of industrious habits, who assisted

families in distress when cooks left suddenly, and new ones came not, at the rate of a shilling a-day and her meals; and on this eventful morning had been so long occupied in getting into his clothes, that it was found necessary to send for him, as his assistance was needed in the general turmoil.

Nor was there less bustle at Mr. Prodgers's, where Jack was still staying, although fewer characters were engaged in it. Our friend had lain awake all night long, sinking into a deep slumber towards morning, from which he was aroused by Mr. Prodgers at half-past seven, who knocked violently at his door, reminding him that he was to be turned off at ten, and that he had come to pinion him; such expressions being figurative of the approaching ceremonial, and proffered assistance in his toilet. When Jack appeared there was no denying that he was looking remarkably well, but at the same time very quiet and thoughtful, which induced Mr. Prodgers to enliven him with the banter usual, and perfectly allowable upon similar occasions, telling him to recollect that he had brought it all upon himself, although it was soon over, and regretting he could hold out few hopes of a reprieve. And, lastly, when the carriage came to the door, he told him the hour had arrived, and, taking his seat with his friend, carried the analogy still further by a novel play upon the word "altar."

The Grimleys and Mrs. Hoddle saw the *cor-*

*tége* depart from Ledbury's in the accustomed order of such things. Miss Grimley observing that she did not think Emma Ledbury looked very happy for a bride, and Mr. Horace Grimley finding fault with a twist in Mr. Ledbury's new fawn-coloured trowsers. And then Miss Grimley, much annoyed to think that Emma—such a sweet girl as she was—should be throwing herself away, with such strange prospects in anticipation, vented her humour on the servants by giving them various commissions, which required their attendance in the back-rooms of the house, and prevented them from balancing themselves from all the windows, which they had hitherto been doing, in company with all the other domestics of the street.

At last the wedding-party returned; and beyond the glimpse which the Grimleys caught of the happy couple as they hurriedly passed from the carriage to the house, they saw no more. But great was the excitement within the walls of the Ledbury mansion. The confectioner who had provided the supper for the renowned evening party, furnished the breakfast upon the present occasion; and never had there been a similar collation in Islington. Hipkins also came to wait, in white Berlin gloves, bringing his umbrella, although the morning was bright and fine; and the two pages together made an important leaf in the chronicles of the day.

And the breakfast — what a scene of prawns

and tears, cold partridges and cambric handkerchiefs, was the breakfast ! There was not a very large party, some twenty or thirty guests ; but they were all intimate friends of the Ledburys, for they had invited nobody from mere compliment. Mr. Prodgers was there of course, as well as Mr. Crinks, their merry *compagnon-de-voyage*, who took this opportunity of showing that he had other clothes besides the check trousers and lace-up shoes in which he had travelled. And these two, introduced to one another by Titus, soon became acquainted, and were of invaluable service in counteracting the crying part of the morning's programme of performances, wondering that the bride and bridegroom should look so miserable, when what they had done was entirely voluntary on their parts. Still Emma was pale and tearful ; and those who had seen Jack in former times dancing the *cancan* "*chez Tonnelier*," or conducting the election of Mr. Rawkins, would scarcely have recognised in him the same person. But, if they were both so serious, they were no less happy : and did not care to intrude their grave thoughts upon the party assembled, for they were too much occupied with each other, until their healths, proposed by Mr. Wilmer, called a few words of warm acknowledgment from Jack, and a few more tears from his weeping, blushing, smiling Emma ; which also made Titus wipe his spectacles for very emotion. Mr. Crinks, as we

have stated, did not feel at all inclined to cry, nor did Mr. Prodgers; for, being stationed one on each side of Miss Wilmer, they kept that young lady in such a continual state of mirth with their remarks and hopes, at some of which she hardly knew whether to be most alarmed or amused, that her bright laughing eyes allowed no room in them for sentiment. And when nobody was looking, Mr. Crinks gave Master Walter Ledbury repeated glasses of champagne, until at last he tumbled back into the plate-basket, with very faint hopes as to the probability of his ever being extricated; whilst Mr. Prodgers, who kept Bob behind his chair the whole time, as an old friend, finished by rendering his services, for that day at least, entirely unavailable, by means of the same potent beverage. And when the kissing came, Mr. Prodgers pronounced it the best portion of the entertainment, and Miss Wilmer never saw anybody so rude, and Mr. Ledbury — the junior, our own Titus,—laughed, and took wine with everybody, sometimes twice over, and said good things, and proposed Mr. Crinks' health, and finally drank "The Bridesmaids," with their speedy promotion, with three times three and musical honours, which he even led himself, before being publicly requested to return thanks on behalf of the young ladies.

At two o'clock a carriage and four drew up in front of the house; and once more attracted the

Grimleys and Mrs. Hoddle to the windows. And then, in a few minutes afterwards, amidst the fresh cheers of the little boys, and the energetic pantomime of Titus, Jack and Emma entered the carriage, which immediately dashed off with railway speed, and was soon out of the sight of their assembled friends ; but whose most sincere wishes for their happiness and prosperity they carried with them.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

WHICH WINDS UP EVERY BODY'S AFFAIRS.

THERE is one great advantage, in the creation of fictitious characters, which the dramatist enjoys over the novelist: he is not obliged to pursue any of their fortunes beyond the marriage in anticipation, with which the majority of plays terminate; but drops his curtain at once, and allows his audience to form what ideas they best may from what has gone before, as to the ultimate disposition of the various personages in whose fortunes they may have felt interested.

But the modern writer, unless he adopts the precedent afforded by the early fairy novelists—honoured by the authority of antiquity—of simply stating that everybody lived happy all the rest of their lives until they died, is usually expected before he takes his leave of the reader, to give some little parting information respecting the destinies of the different individuals who have figured in his pages. And so we will set this forth; at the same time intreating the reader's indulgence for a very short period before we part.

The latest advices we have received from Paris state, that the last time Aimée was seen she was in a dashing cabriolet, that whirled up the Champs Elysées one fine afternoon, on its way to the promenade in the Bois de Boulogne. Can it be possible that she has forgotten her old friends of the Quartier Latin, and found new ones? Oh, Aimée !

A Sydney newspaper came by chance into Mr. Ledbury's office a very short time back ; and in it Titus read that a married emigrant, named Rawkins, who had enacted the different positions of Hercules and The Gladiators, for a benefit at the Sydney theatre, with great success, was about proceeding to some hitherto undiscovered wilds up the country, together with his wife, whom Titus recollected as formerly landlady of the retail establishment at the corner, from whence Jack Johnson and Prodggers procured their half-and-half in the early ages of their acquaintanceship. The reason given out for this proceeding was, that Mr. Rawkins had received a call,—but whether from the spirit or a creditor did not appear.

Nor was the great delineator of the statues of antiquity the only one of our characters who took up this line. For Mr. Roderick Doo, having passed some pleasant months in confinement after his arrest, upon suspicion of coining, where the accredited barber of the institution paid but small respect to his mustachios, reappeared in a



rusty black suit, a white neckcloth, with his hair cut very short, and in this guise made various morning calls. His object was at one time to solicit donations to the Jehosophat Mission of Aboriginal Illumination ; and at another, for the purpose of collecting subscriptions towards throwing open all the turnpikes in England for the benefit of the poor. Finally, he turned scheme-inventor, having always some project in his head that would bring in a clear ten thousand a year, without one farthing risked or lost.

Mr. Prodgers is working hard at the up-hill labour of forming a medical practice ; and has great hopes of ultimately establishing a first-rate one. The fifteen-shilling case terminated with great credit to himself ; and the old women, who collect upon the occasions of persons making their first appearance upon, or taking their final leave of, the stage of life, with such neighbourly pertinacity, speak of him as a clever gentleman. The Pill of Vitality is also still looking up as it proportionately goes down ; a penny loaf furnishing sufficient body for twelve boxes at thirteen-pence halfpenny ; and he has thoughts of boldly opposing Mr. Koops at the next parish election, having been promised the support of one guardian, and the porter of the workhouse.

The Grimleys remain in the same house ; and Miss Grimley also remains single, in spite of the district meetings, and tract-delivery company.

Her feathered pets increase as her chances of matrimony die off; they are the small birds of prey who feed upon the remains of her decaying hopes. As a final struggle, she will next autumn try the effect of a match-making engaged-against-your-will boarding-house, at a favourite watering-place on the south-eastern coast of Kent.

A few months back there was an awkward break-up, which nobody was surprised at, although everybody remained ignorant of the cause, in the establishment of the De Robinsons. A sale took place, which was numerously and fashionably attended, upon the premises; at which Mrs. Hoddle was present each day, for the purpose of reporting the prices and purchasers of the most remarkable lots, the same evening, to a select tea-circle at Islington. The De Robinsons subsequently went to live at Boulogne: for the purpose, as they publicly gave out, "of educating their family."

Johnson and Emma are, indeed, very happy. Jack has taken a pretty cottage at Highbury, where they now reside; and Titus pays them frequent visits, always accompanied by his flute, and sometimes by Master Walter Ledbury, who gets exceedingly tired and restless after twenty minutes in the parlour, and is then consigned to the society of Bob, between whom and himself there exists the warmest friendship. And Bob, to amuse his visitor, pitches pies innumerable, and

dances hornpipes on his head, with a continuity only broken by the ringing of the parlour-bell, which he generally answers in an extreme state of excitement and demi-toilette. Johnson finds Mrs. Ledbury a kind and excellent mother-in-law : the more so because she has had better sense than to invoke the first shade of domestic discontent by coming "to stay a little while with her daughter," giving her son-in-law the first grounds for supposing, perhaps erroneously, that he is under *surveillance*, however slight, and no longer a free agent.

Titus is the same kind-hearted creature as ever. His knowledge of the world is still far from being acute ; but he always rubs his hands, and looks so happy at his sister's, that it does all their hearts good to see him. His sanguine mind is anticipating all sorts of merry-makings for the ensuing season ; and at times he hints at the practicability of forming a general party to Paris in the autumn ; but we have particular reasons for believing that Emma will not make one of it.

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And now we have but one task left to perform. It is the last, although far from being, to us, the most unimportant. We wish you, reader, respectfully, but earnestly, farewell ; and, in so doing, whilst we throw off our masquerade costume of burlesque for the sober attire of truth and good

feeling, which should ever lie beneath it, we willingly confess that it is with no small regret we break the last strands of the tie which has for a year and a half held our acquaintanceship together. We tender our warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness, in whatever circumstances you yourself most desire to be prosperous. Nor, possibly, will it lessen your approaching Christmas gaiety to know, that the indulgent reception which you awarded to our monthly chronicles has been the means of cheering many a lonely hour, and brightening many an access of that gloomy depression,—that bitter reaction of spirits, which the “comic writer” knows too well, in all its acute intensity.

We are aware, in the unvarying fate of lighter periodical literature, that we shall soon be forgotten—that the multitude admire and applaud the firework as it twirls and sparkles before them; but that, as soon as its display is over, and it has ceased to amuse, they think very little about the case from which its eccentricities were produced; but be assured, however, that some slight sense of gratitude on our parts will not very readily pass away. To borrow from one of the speeches made by Mr. Prodgers to his audience, during his lease-ship of the caravan of wonders, which, from some neglect of ours, was not reported in its proper place, we beg to thank you, in the name of the proprietor and ourselves, for this proof of

your kindness, and to inform you that a different performance will take place in the shortest possible space of time. And so, our present duties having at length been brought to a conclusion, we will finish with the prayer of old Chaucer's "Knyghte," when he came to the end of his story,

"God save all this fayre compaignie?"

THE END.

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